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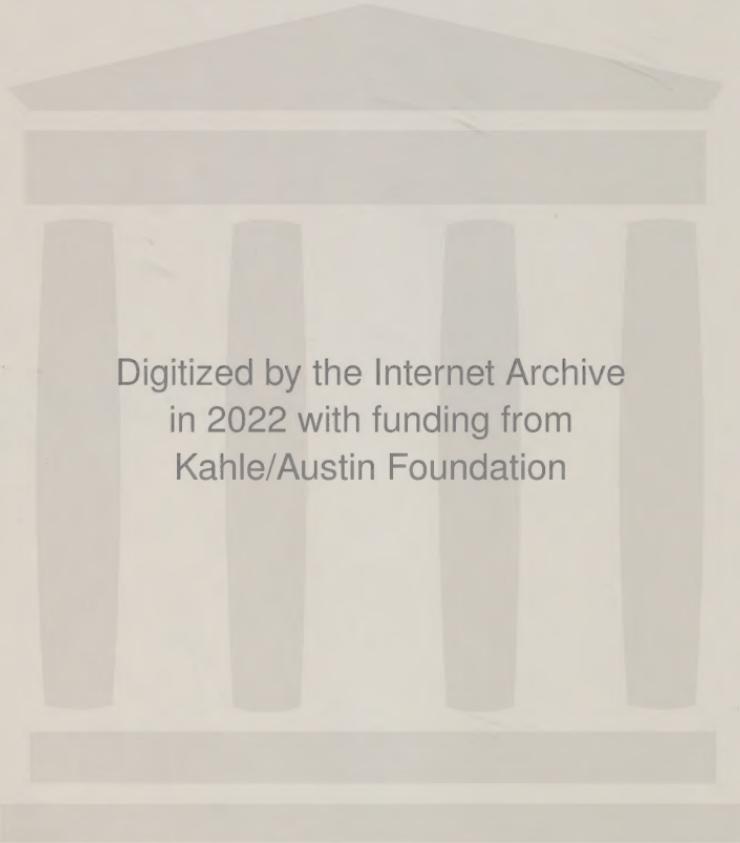
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**THE CLAIMS**

OF

**THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH**

TO

EXCLUSIVE ATTACHMENT AND SUPPORT,

AND

**THE DANGERS**

WHICH MENACE HER FROM

**SCHISM AND INDIFFERENCE,**

CONSIDERED;

IN

**EIGHT SERMONS**

PREACHED BEFORE THE

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, IN THE YEAR MDCCCXX.

At the Lecture founded by

THE LATE REV. JOHN BAMPTON, M. A.

CANON OF SALISBURY.

BY

**GODFREY FAUSSETT, M. A.**

LATE FELLOW OF MAGDALEN COLLEGE.

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EXTRACT  
FROM  
THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT  
OF THE LATE  
REV. JOHN BAMPTON,  
CANON OF SALISBURY.

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— “I give and bequeath my Lands and  
“ Estates to the Chancellor, Masters, and Scho-  
“ lars of the University of Oxford for ever, to  
“ have and to hold all and singular the said  
“ Lands or Estates upon trust, and to the in-  
“ tents and purposes hereinafter mentioned ;  
“ that is to say, I will and appoint that the  
“ Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford  
“ for the time being shall take and receive all  
“ the rents, issues, and profits thereof, and (after  
“ all taxes, reparations, and necessary deduc-  
“ tions made) that he pay all the remainder to  
“ the endowment of eight Divinity Lecture  
“ Sermons, to be established for ever in the said  
“ University, and to be performed in the man-  
“ ner following :



“ I direct and appoint, that, upon the first  
“ Tuesday in Easter Term, a Lecturer be yearly  
“ chosen by the Heads of Colleges only, and by  
“ no others, in the room adjoining to the Print-  
“ ing-House, between the hours of ten in the  
“ morning and two in the afternoon, to preach  
“ eight Divinity Lecture Sermons, the year fol-  
“ lowing, at St. Mary’s in Oxford, between the  
“ commencement of the last month in Lent  
“ Term, and the end of the third week in Act  
“ Term.

“ Also I direct and appoint, that the eight  
“ Divinity Lecture Sermons shall be preached  
“ upon either of the following Subjects—to con-  
“ firm and establish the Christian Faith, and to  
“ confute all heresies and schismatics—upon the  
“ divine authority of the holy Scriptures—upon  
“ the authority of the writings of the primitive  
“ Fathers, as to the faith and practice of the pri-  
“ mitive Church—upon the Divinity of our Lord  
“ and Saviour Jesus Christ—upon the Divinity  
“ of the Holy Ghost—upon the Articles of the  
“ Christian Faith, as comprehended in the  
“ Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds.

“ Also I direct, that thirty copies of the eight  
“ Divinity Lecture Sermons shall be always



“ printed, within two months after they are  
“ preached, and one copy shall be given to the  
“ Chancellor of the University, and one copy to  
“ the Head of every College, and one copy to  
“ the Mayor of the city of Oxford, and one  
“ copy to be put into the Bodleian Library ; and  
“ the expense of printing them shall be paid  
“ out of the revenue of the Land or Estates  
“ given for establishing the Divinity Lecture  
“ Sermons ; and the Preacher shall not be paid,  
“ nor be entitled to the revenue, before they  
“ are printed.

“ Also I direct and appoint, that no person  
“ shall be qualified to preach the Divinity Lec-  
“ ture Sermons, unless he hath taken the de-  
“ gree of Master of Arts at least, in one of the  
“ two Universities of Oxford or Cambridge ;  
“ and that the same person shall never preach  
“ the Divinity Lecture Sermons twice.”



## SERMON I.

---

1 COR. iii. 3.

*Whereas there is among you envying, and strife,  
and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as  
men?*

OF all the principles of our holy religion, there are perhaps none which the world is at present so prone to overlook, as the obligations to Christian unity. We retain indeed the name and the form of a church, but we are very generally ignorant of her nature and pretensions: we pray to be delivered from heresy and schism, without any adequate impression of the importance of our petition; and the sins to which St. Paul assigns so conspicuous a rank among those "works of the flesh," which would exclude men from "the kingdom of God," the very sins which some of the primitive

<sup>a</sup> Gal. v. 19—21.



Fathers considered to be even inexpiable by the <sup>b</sup> blood of martyrdom, are those perhaps which in these days are practised with the least compunction, and witnessed with the most complacency.

Now this preposterous insensibility to offences of such magnitude, is not only to be found where we should expect to find it, in the professed separatist, and in the irreligious and profane, but in even those who have neither forsaken the communion of the Church, nor discarded from their minds a general and lively sense of the value of religion.

The separatist may readily be conceived to have succeeded in closing his eyes to the true character of that devious course, which

<sup>b</sup> Ἀνὴρ δέ τις ἄγιος εἶπε τι δοκοῦν εἶναι τολμηρὸν πλὴν ἀλλ' ὅμως ἐφθέγγετο. Τί ἐν τοῦτο ἔστιν; οὐδὲ μαρτυρίου αἴματα ταῦτα ὁνυστοῖς ἐξαλειφεῖν τὴν ἀμαρτίαν ἔρχεται. Chrysostom. in Epist. ad Ephes. cap. iv. hom. 11. edit. Benedict. vol. xi. p. 86.

Tales etiam si occisi in confessione nominis fuerint, macula ista nec sanguine abluitur. Inexpiabilis et gravis culpa discordiae nec passione purgatur. Esse martyr non potest, qui in Ecclesia non est.—Exhibere se non potest martyrem, qui fraternalm non tenuit caritatem. Cyprian. *de Unit. Eccles.* edit. Baluzii, p. 198.



he professes even on principle to have adopted; and the profane and profligate can scarcely be supposed to entertain any profound respect for what they probably deem the mere circumstantial of a religion, to whose pure precepts and awful sanctions they are alike indifferent. Here however it would be natural to expect that we might close the account; but far otherwise unfortunately is the case; I have yet named but “the beginning of sorrows;” “our foes are even they of our own household.”

There notoriously exists in the very bosom of our Church, a party not inconsiderable in point of numbers or activity, who, in their inordinate zeal for the propagation of their own peculiar notions, league together in the true spirit of a sect; decry the opinions, and undervalue the exertions of their more sober brethren; neglect, as comparatively insignificant, the wholesome restraints of ecclesiastical order; and forgetting the precept, to “avoid them which cause divisions,” on some occasions unite in

c Matt. x. 36.

d Rom. xvi. 17.



the promotion of common religious objects even with the avowed enemies of that Establishment, of which they profess themselves members, and whose institutions they are bound to support; thus, as much as in them lies, removing from the sight and observation of the unreflecting multitude all practical distinction between unity and schism, to which they were already more than sufficiently insensible.

Besides all this, a very large proportion even of the sincerest friends to the Establishment manifestly entertain the most vague and indeterminate ideas of Church communion, and are most inadequately formed respecting the true principles of that Christian unity, which by the blessing of God, rather than from their own settled conviction of its necessity, they have not hitherto been induced to violate.

I. The sources of schism are deeply seated in the natural heart of man. His headstrong obstinacy, his impatience of control, his overweening conceit of superior discernment or superior holiness; in a word, his pride must be effectually



subdued by kindly influences of the Spirit of God, ere we can hope for the final extinction of those unhappy dissensions, which have never yet ceased to disgrace our holy faith, and afford a malicious triumph to the sceptical and the profane. But neither reason, I apprehend, nor experience will lead us to conclude, that the ordinary and unassisted operation of these passions, formidable as they are, could ever, in defiance of some of the plainest precepts of holy writ, occasion religious divisions to such an extent, as to threaten the overthrow of religious establishments, or shake the foundations of the faith.

Whenever therefore schism has become thus formidable, wherever, as is now too evidently the case amongst ourselves, it has attained to such a numerical consequence, as to give a just cause of apprehension to the friends of pure religion and social order, it may fairly be supposed that some adventitious causes have been combined with those already suggested; that perhaps some unhappy deviation from sound policy, some defect in the vigilance of the author-



ized guardians of the Church, or some untoward circumstances peculiar to the times, have served to give it such an unwonted impulse.

In briefly adverting to some of the more prominent of those causes, which appear to have encouraged in this country the rapid progress of religious dissension, and to have produced that utter ignorance of the nature and foundation of ecclesiastical authority, which cannot fail to propagate the evil, I apprehend we shall be disposed without hesitation to recognize among the most efficacious, some of our choicest blessings, even those which we are accustomed to regard, and most justly too, as distinguished marks of the Divine favour. The wisdom and goodness of Divine Providence are constantly and conspicuously exerted in bringing permanent good out of temporary and partial evil ; whilst man, by that perversion of faculties and wilfulness of purpose, which characterize his fallen nature, seems as regularly engaged in counteracting these gracious interpositions, and deriving for himself evil from good.



It would not be easy to set too high a value on the advantages of the Reformation, on the blessing of being emancipated from the unreasonable usurpation and gross corruptions of the Papal see. But at the same time it is sufficiently manifest, that men have been unable to maintain the balance evenly between the opposite extremes; that the scale of ecclesiastical authority is at least as much depressed now, as it was before exalted; that, exulting in their escape from a “yoke which neither ‘they nor their fathers were able to bear,’” they formed far too extravagant an idea of that “liberty wherewith Christ has made ‘them free;’” detesting their former thraldom, they spurned at every the least vestige of spiritual subjection; having learned to view with disgust the corrupt practices and superstitious mummeries of Rome, they began to conceive that all was corrupt, and all was superstitious, that could be traced to that polluted channel; until every ceremony, however decent and significant; every posture of devotion, however expres-

Gal. v. 1.



sive of humility and reverence; every garment of worship, however simple and unostentatious, became offensive to their unreasonable prejudices.

The Reformation too, being in point of fact a separation from an established Church, has manifestly operated with many weak minds, incapable of drawing accurate distinctions, as a precedent for any future separation whatever; and forgetting the wide difference between a corrupt Church usurping an authority beyond her sphere, and a reformed Church claiming her just dominion over her natural members, men have too readily conceived themselves justified in adopting every schismatical measure which caprice or fanaticism or party-spirit might suggest to them.

Who again can appreciate too highly the blessings of that glorious system of toleration, which we have so long enjoyed; of the utter extinction amongst us, not only of the form, but even of the spirit of religious persecution; and the liberty which all alike enjoy of professing, without molestation or reproach, whatever tenets they



may have adopted? But to this source also consequences unfavourable to Christian unity may be plainly traced. To the standard of human opinion we are all too prone to look, as the measure of our duty. By the penalties annexed to crimes, we unconsciously perhaps, yet still in a degree which produces no inconsiderable result in our conduct, regulate our ideas of their atrocity; and where the laws of man pronounce no condemnation against us, we too readily conclude that we are guiltless altogether, and are little disposed to prosecute with scrupulous minuteness the ungrateful inquiry, how far this decision is seconded and sanctioned by the laws of God.

Another very manifest cause of the present contempt of the authority of the Church, is the relaxed and inefficient state of ecclesiastical discipline. In this respect it cannot be disguised that our Reformation was <sup>f</sup> incomplete. “There was one thing

<sup>f</sup> Eight commissioners, among whom Cranmer appears to have taken the lead, were appointed in the reign of Edward VI. to reform the ecclesiastical laws. They completed their work, and delivered it for revision and



“ yet wanting,” said Bishop Burnet, “ to complete the Reformation of this Church, which was, the restoring a primitive discipline against scandalous persons, the establishing the government of the Church in ecclesiastical hands, and the taking it out of lay hands, who have so long profaned it, and have exposed the authority of the Church, and of the censures of it, chiefly excommunication, to the contempt of the nation, by which the reverence due to holy things is in so great a measure lost, and the dreadfulest of all censures is now become the most scorned and despised.”

Whether from a horror of the former abuses of ecclesiastical power, or from a natural assimilation to the independent spirit of modern times, or from the unreformed, and by consequence the complicated and

correction to another commission of thirty-two. Unfortunately the death of the king interrupted their progress, and the business has never since been resumed. For an account of this, as well as of the chief heads of the intended laws, see Burnet’s History of the Reformation, vol. ii. p. 195—202.

<sup>g</sup> Burnet’s Abridgment of the same, p. 369.



intractable state of our ecclesiastical laws, or from all these causes combined, the terrors of censure and suspension and excommunication are no more; and the awful sentence which brought <sup>b</sup>a mighty emperor to prostration and penance before the venerable Ambrose, would now probably, if

<sup>h</sup> "Open offenders were not suffered once to enter into the house of the Lord, nor admitted to common prayer and the use of the holy sacraments, with other true Christians, until they had done open penance before the whole Church. And this was practised not only upon mean persons, but also upon the rich, noble, and mighty persons; yea upon Theodosius, that puissant and mighty emperor, whom, for committing a grievous and wilful murder, St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, reproved sharply, and did also excommunicate the said emperor, and brought him to open penance. And they that were so justly exempted and banished, as it were, from the house of the Lord, were taken (as they be indeed) for men divided and separated from Christ's Church, and in most dangerous estate; yea, as St. Paul saith, even given unto Satan the Devil for a time; and their company was shunned and avoided of all godly men and women, until such time as they by repentance and public penance were reconciled." *Homily of the right use of the Church*, second part. For a fuller account of the excommunication of Theodosius, as extracted from the Ecclesiastical Histories of Sozomen and Theodoret, see Hickes on the Dignity of the Episcopal Order, p. 217—222.



pronounced against the meanest individual amongst us, be treated with derision and contempt.

Again; the general ignorance of the nature and constitution of the visible Church has been very materially caused by the scantiness of the means of instruction afforded to the laity on such points. The definition of the Church in our Articles, probably from that moderate and conciliatory spirit so honourably characteristic of our Church, a spirit from which, in this instance at least, she seems to have been a sufferer, appears to have been purposely

<sup>1</sup> Article XIX. thus defines the Church: "The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same." Article XXIII. goes a step further, and declares that no man may minister the sacraments "before he be lawfully called and sent;" and then adds, "those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this work by men who have public authority given unto them in the congregation, to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard." These definitions certainly embrace most important truths, but they leave the question between the Episcopalian and the Presbyterian wholly undecided.



drawn up with less precision than was to have been desired. Our Catechism too, though an admirable summary of instruction on every point which it undertakes to elucidate, conveys no information whatever on the important subjects of Church communion and schism.

The sectaries, on the other hand, have never been remiss, and when their minds are once fully satisfied of the correctness of their own persuasion, it is not to be expected that they should be remiss, in explaining and inculcating the principles of their dissent.

Thus a most unfair, and, I conceive, unnecessary advantage is thrown into their scale. For it is impossible to doubt, that under circumstances so unfavourable, and by a method so inauspicious, instead of conciliating enemies, we must have been constantly losing many well-disposed but ill-informed friends, by having left that undefined, and almost unnoticed, which ought to have been accurately explained in some form universally intelligible, and in universal circulation.



Neither has the deficiency here observed been at all adequately remedied by the exertions of the Clergy themselves. “Upon ‘these topics,’ said an eminent Prelate of our Church, towards the close of the last century, ‘the Clergy of late years have ‘been more silent than is perfectly consistent with their duty, from a fear, as I ‘conceive, of acquiring the name and reputation of High Churchmen<sup>k</sup>.’” And there is, I apprehend, no sufficient reason to believe, that had Bishop Horsley survived to the present day, he would have seen grounds to reverse his observation or retract his censure.

That a gradual improvement in these particulars has been observable in the members of our Church, may, I believe, be admitted; but it does not appear to have kept pace with the occasion which so imperiously demanded it. A conviction of increasing necessity and impending danger has aroused numbers to a more lively sense of their duty in this respect, and called forth in sermons

<sup>k</sup> Bishop Horsley’s Charge to the Clergy of the Diocese of St. David’s, at his primary Visitation in 1790.



and charges, and more regular treatises<sup>1</sup>, many productions highly creditable to the zeal and talents of their authors; but, at the same time, it is but too evident, that there has not been that general combination and identity of exertion, which could serve to stem the adverse torrent, augmented as it is from the opposite, but in this instance unhappily united, sources of schismatical hostility and latitudinarian indifference.

Besides, the writings alluded to having had to contend with inveterate prejudices, or, to say the least, having been addressed to minds little prepared by any previous impressions for the reception of the truths advanced, and tainted perhaps by the specious and imposing sentiments of modern liberality, have acquired but little popularity in proportion to their intrinsic merit,

<sup>1</sup> Among those most deserving of attention, are Archdeacon Daubeny's "Guide to the Church," and his more recent publication "on the Nature, Progress, and "Consequences of Schism;" Mr. Sikes's "Discourse on "Parochial Communion;" and Mr. Spry's Bampton Lectures on the subject of "Christian Unity," preached in the year 1816.



and to the importance of their subject, or even in proportion to the extensive circulation of other works of far inferior pretensions, but of dissimilar character and tendency.

It is far from necessary, and I believe would be altogether unjust, to suppose, that the silence of the Clergy on the topics alluded to is wholly, or even perhaps mainly, attributable to the fear suggested by the learned Prelate. Other sentiments far more honourable to their Christian character have manifestly contributed to the effect;—charity to those of opposite persuasions, a dislike to controversy, a desire to avoid offence, an idea perhaps that error would die away more readily from being left to itself;—above all, probably, an inadequate impression on their own minds of the consequence of these topics, too naturally arising from the influence of general example, and the contagion of prevailing sentiments. Some or all of these motives, closely allied as several of them are to goodness and moderation, and none of them absolutely inconsistent with integrity, have no



doubt had their share in inducing many of our brethren weakly to palliate, or even to suppress truths, which it was their duty to have explained with precision and maintained with firmness; to make a most unwarranted and unscriptural distinction between the doctrinal precepts and sacred institutions of Christianity, excepting the latter from discussion as trivial, and thus too plainly "<sup>m</sup>shunning to declare all the coun-  
sel of God."

It need not surely be further urged, that the result of such a system, generally acted on, must be, as we experience it to be, a laity most imperfectly informed of their duty, as far as relates to Church communion and schism, and of course in the same proportion exposed to the plausible arguments of the sectary.

If I have succeeded in stating with any tolerable degree of correctness the leading causes of our religious dissensions, who can possibly reflect on the combined operation of such formidable principles for such a

<sup>m</sup> Acts xx. 17.



long course of years, without well-grounded and serious apprehension? Who can even contemplate what his daily intercourse with society must present to his observation, of the increasing defections from our Church, and of the indifference with which such defections are regarded, without being convinced that our situation as an Ecclesiastical Establishment is becoming extremely critical? I will not say that we should look to this crisis with despair, and regard the difficulties as insurmountable by any probable exertions of our own, seconded, as we might without presumption hope, by the blessing of God on his own positive and sacred institutions: but this I must say, that the listless apathy, the blind security, and latitudinarian spirit of these alarming times are but wretched auxiliaries in the cause, and that men must be rouzed to far juster views, and far more lively zeal, ere we can hope again to turn the stream of opinion against our adversaries, or even to erect a competent barrier against the rising tide of encroachment which threatens to overwhelm us.



II. In order to present a clearer idea of the prejudices which we have to encounter, I shall briefly notice several of the more conspicuous forms, under which the modern ignorance and misapprehension on the subject of Church communion and ecclesiastical authority is found to prevail. And should it appear no difficult task, to show even on generally acknowledged principles, that they are utterly at variance with consistency and reason, it will serve as an useful introduction to the more regular discussion of our duty in these particulars, and leave the mind more open to conviction from the arguments which may be urged in support of it from the express precepts of holy writ and the recorded practice of the primitive ages.

The leading prejudice of the age, the very key-stone of modern liberality, is the idea that sincerity is all in all; that, provided we are secure of our “integrity before God,”<sup>n</sup> and conscientiously embrace

<sup>n</sup> “When you are secure of your integrity before God, and of your sincere disposition to search after his will, and to receive the truth in the love of truth, whenso-



religion under the form that best accords with our own views, it matters not whether we be of this or that communion, or whether we be of any communion at all. This position, subversive as it must be of every notion of ecclesiastical authority and Christian unity, was the main foundation of a controversy, most preposterously headed by a Bishop of our own Church; who is, I apprehend, still regarded as prime authority by the numerous and, it should seem, increasing party, who at the present day have adopted his loose opinions. It is not, however, easy to conceive arguments more triumphantly confuted and exposed, than those of Bishop Hoadly then were in the Letters<sup>o</sup> of the celebrated Law.

“ ever and from whomsoever it is offered, this will, I confess, lead you (as it ought all of us) not to be afraid of the terrors of men, or the vain words of regular and uninterrupted successions, authoritative benedictions, excommunications, or absolutions; nullity or validity of God’s ordinances to the people, upon account of niceties and trifles, or any other the like dreams of those who have separated themselves, or of those who follow them in these doctrines; &c.” *Bishop Hoadly’s Preservative against Nonjurors*, p. 98.

<sup>o</sup> These three letters have been republished in the



This class of errors seems in a great degree founded on vague and mistaken notions with respect to the nature of conscience. "There is nothing," I quote the words of Archbishop Sharpe, "more in "our mouths than conscience, and yet "there are few things we have generally "taken less pains to understand. We sit "down too often with this, that it is some- "thing within us, we do not know what, "which we are to obey in all that it sug- "gests to us, and we trouble ourselves no "further about it<sup>p</sup>."

"Scholar Armed," an admirable collection of tracts, "intended for the information and assistance of young "Students in our Schools and Universities."

<sup>p</sup> Discourse of Conscience, by Archbishop Sharpe, in London Cases, p. 145. "By which means," he adds, "it frequently comes to pass, that though we have "espoused very dangerous errors, or happen to be en- "gaged in very sinful practices, yet believing and act- "ing, as we say, according to our conscience, we do not "only think ourselves perfectly right and safe, while we "continue in this state, but are effectually armed against "all sorts of arguments and endeavours that can be "useful for the bringing us to a better mind. This is "too visible in many cases, but in none more than in "the case of those that at this day separate from the "communion of the Church as it is established among "us." *Ibid.*



Conscience, properly understood, is not that confident persuasion which we may perhaps feel on any particular subject, but the opinion which we form of our actions by comparing them with some approved standard of judgment<sup>q</sup>; and this standard, with a Christian, can be no other than the law of God, as revealed in his holy Scriptures. But even here it is too certain that a man may err in the application of his rule, and that his error may lead him into sin; so that it is far from following as a necessary consequence, that, because he is confessedly wrong who opposes the dictates of his conscience, he must be as surely right who sincerely acts in conformity to it.

But if we go still further, and admit the vague and indefinite ideas of sincerity and conscience which now prevail; if we

<sup>q</sup> "Always, when we speak of conscience in our actions, we have respect to some law or rule, by which those actions are to be directed and governed, and by their agreeableness or disagreeableness with which they become morally good or evil." *Discourse of Conscience, by Archbishop Sharpe, in London Cases*, p. 146. See also Daubeny's Guide to the Church, Discourse vii.



once assent to Bishop Hoadly's position, that "the favour of God follows sincerity, " as such, and consequently equally follows every equal degree of sincerity<sup>r</sup>; we are inevitably involved in conclusions far exceeding the contemplation of many who have unthinkingly embraced the insidious premises, conclusions not more hostile to any particular form of Christianity than to Christianity itself; since, on such principles, it would be difficult to shew why a sincere heathen or a sincere infidel should be less in favour with God than a sincere Christian; it would not be easy to comprehend why our blessed Saviour should have pronounced a peculiar benediction<sup>s</sup> on those who believe, or why he should have assigned to his followers the laborious and hazardous task of "preaching the Gospel to every creature<sup>t</sup>." Nay, as Law forcibly argues, "it is impossible there should be any difference, either as to merit or happiness, between a sincere martyr and a sincere persecutor; and he

<sup>r</sup> Hoadly's Preservative, p. 91.

<sup>s</sup> Mark xvi. 16. John xx. 29.

<sup>t</sup> Mark xvi. 15.



" that burns the Christian, if he be but in  
" earnest, has the same title to a reward  
" for it, as he that is burnt for believing in  
" Christ."<sup>u</sup>

So far indeed is sincerity from forming a justification of misconduct, that in many cases it may itself be sinful; or at least be the strongest evidence of sin. It may be altogether our own fault that we are sincere in an ill-grounded persuasion. Some wilful misconduct, some unhappy abuse of our faculties, some culpable negligence in improving those means of information which would have directed our sincerity to a worthy object, may be the true source of our infatuation.

In short, the unqualified admission of the principle of sincerity would sanctify every atrocity which deluded enthusiasts have ever committed; and to maintain its validity would be as it were to assert, that whatever we conceive to be right cannot be wrong; in short, to supersede the laws of God by the caprices of individual persuasion. Let it never be forgotten, that, like

<sup>u</sup> Law's First Letter to Bishop Hoadly, Scholar Armed, vol. i. p. 282.



St. Paul, we may “sin ignorantly in unbelief<sup>x</sup>,” even at the time when we “verily think within ourselves that we are “doing God service;” that God, in just recompense for aggravated and persevering offences, may sometimes “send men a “strong delusion, that they should believe “a lie”; and that “there is a way that “seemeth right unto a man, but the end “thereof are the ways of death.”

Another very general shape, under which the latitudinarian misconceptions of these times present themselves, is a complete confusion of ideas between the Church as a society of divine institution, and the Church as a political establishment; or rather, perhaps, a disposition to consider the Church, so far as its outward polity is concerned, as left altogether to human discretion. Many persons, even among those who are well affected to our Establishment, are obviously tinctured with this error. Believing it to be their duty to “submit to “every ordinance of man for the Lord’s

<sup>x</sup> 1 Tim. i. 13.

<sup>y</sup> 2 Thess. ii. 11.

<sup>z</sup> Prov. xvi. 25.



“ sake<sup>a</sup>,” they are the decided enemies of separation, and the friends of ecclesiastical order. But the foundation of their adherence is partial and insecure. Their principle indeed is true within certain limits, and useful in conjunction with a higher; but it is one, which of itself might serve the cause of any heresy whatever, provided it were patronized by the civil power, and established as the religion of the country.

Where the institutions of God and the laws of man, as amongst ourselves, happily coincide, the obligations to conformity are multiplied, and separation incurs the guilt of twofold disobedience: but <sup>b</sup>they may be, as they have been, at variance; and then, “whether it be right in

<sup>a</sup>. 1 Pet. ii. 13.

<sup>b</sup> “The laws of men in this affair of religion are of “the same obligation and force that they are in other “matters.’ If they command things indifferent, they “are to be obeyed for the authority of the command; “if they enjoin things in their own nature good, the “necessity of obedience is greater; but if they com-“mand things unlawful, we are not to comply, but “obey God rather than man.” *Law’s Third Letter to Bishop Hoadly, Scholar Armed*, vol. i. p. 482.



"the sight of God to hearken unto men  
"more than unto God, judge ye<sup>c</sup>."

It is notorious that the Church of Christ subsisted for several ages independent on the civil powers, and for the most part in open defiance of them. If kings have since become "her nursing fathers<sup>d</sup>"; if the Church has been generally enabled, without the sacrifice of what is essential to her existence, to form an union with the temporal authorities, and the institutions of men have, in numerous instances, been intimately blended with the ordinances of Christ; it is our part to bless God for the tranquil and unmolested course which is offered to our obedience by this auspicious union, not to forget either the essential distinctness of these powers, or the infinite disparity of their claims. Christ's "kingdom is not of this world"<sup>e</sup>, though the world may come into the kingdom of Christ; and should the rulers of this world either reject and oppose Christianity, or even enforce it under some form destitute

<sup>c</sup> Acts iv. 19.    <sup>d</sup> Isaiah xlix. 23.    <sup>e</sup> John xviii. 36.



of the essentials of a Church, or debased by destructive corruptions, a Christian's duty need not be mistaken.

One manifest consequence of establishing the Christian Church on a human rather than on a divine foundation, must be endless innovation; mutability being quite as inseparable from the devices of man, as stability and permanency are from the works of God. This consideration alone would have been a strong presumption, independently of every weightier argument, against the idea that a society confessedly of divine institution at its commencement, should afterwards be left, even in its characteristic outlines and leading principles, to the caprice and fickleness of man, to the imminent hazard, or rather to the moral certainty, of losing all those features of consistency and sameness, which are to be traced in every other operation of the Divine hand, and which it would be natural to expect in the works of that eternal and unchangeable Being, "in whom is no 'variableness nor shadow of turning';"



who is “the same yesterday, to-day, and “for ever.”<sup>f</sup>

Another striking presumption against the soundness of the principle in question, which should go far towards undeceiving those at least who have adopted it as the argument for their adherence to our Establishment, is, that, however they may find in it a motive to conformity, it becomes to others, by one natural and easy transition, the very strongest encouragement of their separation. Where the laws, like our own, merely establish and maintain a Church, and instead of tyrannically inflicting penalties on the non-conformist, wisely and humanely support and protect him in whatever profession his conscience, well or ill-informed, may have led him to embrace; those who ground ecclesiastical authority on civil appointment, should they, from whatever motives, have fallen into schism, too readily confound, as was before remarked, legal impunity with absolute innocence, and the forbearance of human authority with acquittal in the sight of heaven.

<sup>f</sup> Heb. xiii. 8.



This is, in fact, another most prevailing modification of the latitudinarian notions of the day. Liberty of conscience, by which is usually understood a right inherent in men, and duly recognized by our laws, of choosing for themselves in matters of religion, appears to be considered by a numerous body of our countrymen, as their most valued privilege, their natural and cherished birthright. "Ask an ignorant man," says an excellent writer on this subject, "why he separates from the Church? his answer probably will be, that he lives in 'a land of liberty, where he has a *right* to worship God in the way he thinks proper. Ask a man of reading and understanding, and he will quote respectable authority for the same opinion."

It really almost too nearly resembles the regular demonstration of an axiom, to set about the formal confutation of so gross a fallacy<sup>b</sup>, by urging that the laws of man can neither supersede nor alter the laws of God. Let us, however, consider this prin-

<sup>a</sup> Daubeny's Guide to the Church, vol. i. p. 420. second edition.

<sup>b</sup> "If God then has been pleased to appoint a way in



ciple in its obvious application to other cases. It will be readily admitted, that there are numerous crimes, and some of them of the most heinous description, which are necessarily beyond the cognizance of human laws, and exempt from every human penalty; and that there are others, with which, from motives of policy, they forbear to interfere. Will it therefore be maintained, that a man has an absolute right to do all the wrong which the laws permit, that he may measure his liberty by his impunity, that he may freely and with a safe conscience expatiate throughout the extensive range of iniquity, which is thus opened to his career? If there could be no hesitation in replying, that in all these cases the commands of God and the immutable obliga-

" which he will be worshipped, I am no more at liberty, upon the mere ground of my own persuasion,  
" to worship him in any other way, than I am at liberty  
" to act in contradiction to his revealed will in any other  
" matter. When men, therefore, talk of liberty of con-  
" science, they would do well to consider, whether it be  
" not, as the phrase is now generally understood, rather  
" a liberty of their own making, than any portion of  
" that liberty wherewith Christ has made them free."

*Ibid.* p. 132.



tions of religion await not the decision of any earthly tribunal, why in the case before us is it not also made the first consideration, what are the institutions of God? Why is it not equally plain, that to found a claim to neglect or alter these institutions on the <sup>i</sup>permission of the civil magistrate, is to attribute to him a right which he neither possesses nor assumes; to look to an

<sup>i</sup> The extreme inconsistency of such a plea, when advanced by our own Dissenters, is well worthy of more particular observation. "The Dissenters," says an ingenious writer, " plead, that what is called the Act of Toleration has given a sanction to their separation, " and taken away the sin of it. And," at the same time, with respect to the Church of England, " they have argued, that it even ceases to be a Church of Christ, because it acts under the allowance of the civil power. " Yet in their own case, the King and Parliament, by an act of grace, can make schism to be no schism! The protection we have from the civil government is cast in our teeth as a disadvantage which extends even to the unchurching of us, and throwing us out of the kingdom of Christ: but the same thing (supposing them to have it) takes away from them the guilt of their separation! And thus they give to the King and Parliament the privilege of God himself, who only can forgive sin; which is more than we ever allowed them!" *Short View of the present State of the Argument between the Church of England and the Dissenters. Scholar Armed*, vol. ii. p. 58, 59.



authority merely political for privileges purely spiritual, for a liberty, in short, which he can neither give nor take away?

In fact, Christianity in its essential institutions, as well as in its doctrines, is to us precisely what it was to our forefathers in the primitive ages, and what it will be to our posterity in the remotest generation; it came forth from its Divine Author perfect and immutable, and susceptible of no improvement from the inventions of man. In religion, therefore, the liberty now contended for is absolute licentiousness;—to innovate is to impair; to model anew is to destroy; and legitimate reformation is no more than a recurrence<sup>k</sup> to those original principles, which in the lapse of ages may have suffered from corruption or disuse.

<sup>k</sup> Bishop Hall speaks thus of the principles on which our own Reformation was conducted:—“ Be it known “ to all the world, that our Church is only reformed or “ repaired, not made new: there is not one stone of a “ new foundation laid by us; yea, the old walls stand “ still; only the overcasting of those ancient stones with “ the untempered mortar of new inventions displeases “ us. Set aside the corruptions, and the Church is the “ same.”



Another notion highly prevalent at the present day, and it unfortunately prevails among many who are sincerely disposed to piety and religion, is, that provided purity of doctrine<sup>1</sup> be preserved, it matters not under what form of Church government it be, or whether under any whatever; in short, that where the Gospel is truly preached, there the Church of Christ is assembled.

"But they consider not," as Leslie<sup>m</sup> well remarked, "that the government was ordained to secure the doctrine; and that no instance can be given, from Jeroboam downwards, where the change of the government did not bring along with it a change of doctrine."

The Church, we are assured by the Apostle, is "the pillar and ground of the truth"; the pillar necessary to its support, the ground without which it could not stand. If we can doubt this in our own

<sup>1</sup> This setting up of purity against discipline bears rather a striking resemblance to the Puritanism which once overthrew both Church and State.

<sup>m</sup> Leslie, Dissert. concerning Eccles. Hist. vol. i. p. 731. <sup>n</sup> 1 Tim. iii. 15.



particular case, if we are unconvinced that it is to the Church alone that we are indebted for the preservation of sound doctrine, let us but refer to our historical experience. During the temporary extinction of ecclesiastical authority in this country, no less than sixty heresies<sup>o</sup>, some of them of the most monstrous description, are recorded to have arisen; all of which, with the exception of three or four of the most eminent, on the restoration of Episcopacy, "instantly disappeared, as mists before the sun."

Without making any further appeal to Scripture in the present stage of the argument, suffice it to observe, that submission to spiritual<sup>p</sup> governors is as decidedly enforced in holy writ, as any doctrine or precept that could be named, and that it is in vain to institute an inquiry into the comparative importance of commands emanating from the same divine source, of course requiring the same unqualified obedience. Yea, rather, much worse than in

<sup>o</sup> Leslie, Dissert. vol. i. p. 732.

<sup>p</sup> 1 Thess. v. 12. and Heb. xiii. 17.

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vain must it be, thus to weigh the commands of Heaven in the balance of ignorance and presumption, and rebelliously attempt to “put asunder what God has” manifestly “joined together.” Indeed, to adopt the language of the learned and excellent Hickes, “the institutions of Christ, “without making comparison between “them, are dear and sacred to me as well “as his revelations; and I have no more “power to do any thing against the doc-“trines which I think relate to the being “and government or discipline of the “Church as a society, than those which “relate unto it as a sect<sup>q</sup>. ”

III. The object of these lectures being to demonstrate the unreasonableness of separation from that pure branch of the Church of Christ which is established in this country; to assert her claims to our undivided attachment; and to point out the dangers which menace her from the latitudinarian spirit of the times, I purpose to give a general and scriptural view of the

<sup>q</sup> Hickes on the Dignity of the Episc. Order, p. 259.



nature and criminality of schism;—to apply the argument more fully to our own case, by maintaining the necessity of an apostolical Episcopacy, and of a divinely instituted priesthood;—to illustrate the happy, or, to say the least, the unobjectionable course which our Church has adopted in those points which are left to human discretion;—and, finally, to consider briefly the true principles of that alliance, which has been for the most part formed throughout the Christian world between the ecclesiastical and civil powers, so much to the advantage of both, where it is prudently conducted; as well as the evils to be apprehended from losing sight of those principles, and from the injudicious management either of that protection and support of the Church which this alliance implies, or of that toleration of other persuasions which it should always admit.

In pursuing arguments of this description, it is unfortunately difficult to avoid an air of controversy; simply maintaining one's own decided opinion on controverted points, being an indirect censure of those who hold



the contrary persuasion. Neither is it easy, even where it is least merited, to escape the imputation of bigotry and uncharitableness, from the unqualified liberality of the times. Assuredly, however, the most ardent zeal for the truth is perfectly consistent with the most unbounded charity towards those who are unhappily in error. Nay, perhaps, the utmost perfection of Christian charity, on such occasions, consists, not in weakly suppressing what it is of importance to vindicate and maintain, but in making the most marked distinction between the offender and the offence; in marking the offence with decided reprobation, while, so far from pronouncing sentence on the offender, it hopes that in his peculiar case a thousand extenuations may be pleaded, and rejoices that a Being of infinite mercy and wisdom can see and appreciate them all.

Accordingly, I cannot but agree with the learned author of the History of Infant Baptism<sup>1</sup>, that there is, perhaps, no coun-

<sup>1</sup> Wall's History of Infant Baptism, vol. ii. p. 433.  
fourth edition.



try in the world where it is so difficult to repent of schism as this; the prejudices of education, the frequency of the offence, and the general spirit of the age, having with many minds obliterated every idea of its sinfulness.

But can it really be less a sin because men have ceased to deem it sinful? and must we omit all mention of it, lest we disturb the self-complacency of those who have unwarily adopted it? On this principle, is there a corruption in doctrine which we could consistently expose? is there a vicious practice that we could venture to reprobate? The important precept, “to be “instant in season and out of season, to “reprove, rebuke, and exhort,” must be abandoned as impracticable, and consigned to perpetual oblivion; and the office of the Christian preacher would be no more.

After all that has been urged, however, should there still be a disposition to question the expediency of entering on these topics in times like the present, I can only



observe, that truth, religious truth more especially, being at all times important, is never more so than when it is most neglected or most arraigned; that exactly in proportion to the disrepute into which it may have fallen, is the necessity for exertion in its behalf; that the obvious duty of a Minister of the Gospel is to instruct his hearers most sedulously where their ignorance is most conspicuous, and to apply his warmest dissuasives to their most prevailing faults.

If then times such as the Apostle contemplated have manifestly arrived; if men will no longer “endure sound doctrine, but “after their own lusts heap to themselves “teachers, having itching ears<sup>t</sup>;” what remains for us, but to attend to his appropriate exhortation, “to watch in all things, “endure afflictions, do the work of an “evangelist, make full proof of our min-“istry<sup>u</sup>;” striving to reclaim them to obedience and submission to those who “watch “for their souls<sup>x</sup>;” and to convince them

<sup>t</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 3.    <sup>u</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 5. .    <sup>x</sup> Heb. xiii. 17.



that they are bound by their Christian profession, not only in their civil, but also in their religious capacity, to "follow after 'the things which make for peace'?"

y Rom. xiv. 19.



## SERMON II.

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1 COR. xii. 25.

*That there should be no schism in the body.*

THE essential truths of our holy religion are so decidedly enforced, so variously and so repeatedly pressed on the attention, that the unprejudiced and inexperienced reader of the sacred volume would be disposed to conclude that no blindness could overlook, no perverseness misapprehend them. This is conspicuously the case in all that relates to the unity of the Church of Christ, and the guilt attendant on its violation. Presented to us under every variety of form, in the illustrations of metaphor, in the precision of express precept, and the encouragements of example, it is interwoven with the very texture of holy writ. Whence comes it to pass then, with respect to so numerous a body of professing Christians, that, on these points at least, "seeing they



“ cannot see, and hearing they cannot understand<sup>a</sup>;” that they are become utterly insensible to the sin of schism, the actual crime of separation from a branch of the Christian Church, correct in its constitution, and pure in its doctrine?

I. That this ignorance of their duty can arise from no defect in the information to be derived on this subject from the sacred Scriptures, is capable of the most extensive demonstration. Every notice which we have of the Church of Christ, every image under which it is introduced to us, implies indivisible unity, and leads us to consider Christians not as isolated and unconnected individuals, but as persons closely incorporated in that sacred association. They are “one fold under one Shepherd<sup>b</sup>;” they are “a building fitly framed together, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone<sup>c</sup> ;” they are members of “one” mystical “body<sup>d</sup>,” of which Christ is the head; and “by one Spirit they are all baptized into one body;” there is accordingly

<sup>a</sup> Luke viii. 10.

<sup>c</sup> Eph. ii. 20, 21.

<sup>b</sup> John x. 16.

<sup>d</sup> 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13.



“ one hope of their calling, one Lord, one  
“ faith, one baptism, one God and Father  
“ of all<sup>e</sup>. ”

But the scriptural representations of the Church not only lead us to infer its unity, but that order also, and regularity, and subordination, without which its unity could never have been preserved. It is “a kingdom,” of which Christ is the King, and the ministers of the Gospel are his “ambassadors<sup>f</sup>;” it is “the city of the living God<sup>h</sup>,” and Christians “fellow-citizens with the saints<sup>i</sup>. ” They are also the “household of God<sup>k</sup>;” Christ himself is “the Master<sup>l</sup>” of that sacred family, and his ministers are “stewards of the manifold grace of God<sup>m</sup>. ” Moreover, the several officers on whom it was to depend to govern this Church, were the appointment of Christ himself: “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the

<sup>e</sup> Eph. iv. 4, 5, 6.    <sup>f</sup> Matt. xvi. 28.    <sup>g</sup> 2 Cor. v. 20.

<sup>h</sup> Heb. xii. 22.    <sup>i</sup> Eph. ii. 19.    <sup>k</sup> Ibid.

<sup>l</sup> Matt. x. 25.    <sup>m</sup> 1 Pet. iv. 10.



" saints, for the work of the ministry, for  
" the edifying of the body of Christ<sup>n</sup>."

In the true spirit of these scriptural representations of the Christian Church, the early converts to the Gospel appear, for a time at least, to have exhibited a heavenly pattern of brotherly love and religious unity, to which we shall vainly seek to find a parallel in any succeeding age. "They continued stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship<sup>o</sup>." "They had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need<sup>p</sup>;" "and the multitude of them that believed were of one heart, and of one soul<sup>q</sup>."

But when, at length, the restless passions of our corrupt nature began to operate even among the followers of the lowly Jesus, when dissensions interrupted their hitherto harmonious association, and threatened the unity of the Church, how did the Apostles conduct themselves in this new emergency? In what light did St.

<sup>n</sup> Eph. iv. 11, 12.

<sup>o</sup> Acts ii. 42.

<sup>p</sup> Acts ii. 44, 45.

<sup>q</sup> Acts iv. 32.



Paul, of whose proceedings we have the most information, view the growing mischief;—St. Paul, the popular, the accommodating Apostle, who, on some occasions, could become “all things to all men<sup>r</sup>;” and who, so far from possessing a disposition to be peremptory on minor points, declared that he would not “eat flesh so “long as the world stood,” if he thereby caused his “brother to offend<sup>s</sup>? ” Is this, with him, a point of minor importance? So far from it, that there is, perhaps, nothing on which he expresses himself with greater decision, not a practice which draws from him more thorough reprobation.

When addressing himself to his Corinthian converts, to a people even notorious for the vices commonly attendant on wealth and luxury, and whom he had to reprove for flagrant violations of morality, what constitutes his leading charge, what is evidently uppermost in his thoughts? not their immoralities, but their divisions. His ordinary form of salutation ended, he thus immediately commences, “Now<sup>t</sup> I beseech

<sup>r</sup> 1 Cor. ix. 22.

<sup>s</sup> 1 Cor. viii. 13.

<sup>t</sup> 1 Cor. i. 10.



“ you, brethren, by the name of our Lord  
“ Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same  
“ thing, and that there be no divisions  
“ (*σχίσματα*) among you, but that ye be  
“ perfectly joined together in the same  
“ mind and in the same judgment.” With  
this introduction the whole Epistle cor-  
responds; the main, the pervading object  
of which appears to have been, to reprove  
their strifes and dissensions; to warn them  
against an undue<sup>u</sup> preference for particular  
teachers; to furnish them with rules for the  
orderly<sup>x</sup> celebration of Divine worship, a  
point on which some had wantonly offend-  
ed; to urge them to preserve their ap-  
pointed stations in the ministry,<sup>y</sup> “ that  
“ there might be no schism in the body;”  
and to guard them against presuming on  
their spiritual gifts,<sup>z</sup> to the introduction of  
disorder, and the violation of that “ char-  
ity,” without which,<sup>a</sup> to speak with the

<sup>u</sup> 1 Cor. ch. i. ii. iii. iv.

<sup>x</sup> Ibid. ch. xi.

<sup>y</sup> Ibid. ch. xii.

<sup>z</sup> Ibid. ch. xiii. xiv.

<sup>a</sup> 1 Cor. xiii. 1—3. For remarks on the true scope  
of this celebrated chapter, as addressed to the schismati-  
tical Corinthians, in order to recommend to them that  
“ charity” which “ beareth and endureth all things,”



“ tongues of men and of angels, and un-  
“ derstand all mysteries and all knowledge,  
“ would profit them nothing.”

His Epistles indeed to all the Churches which he had planted, abound with the plainest precepts to the same effect. He exhorts his converts to “ obey those that “ have the rule over them<sup>b</sup>;” to “ walk by “ the same rule<sup>c</sup>;” to “ stand fast in one “ Spirit, with one mind and one mouth “ glorifying God<sup>d</sup>;” to “ mark them who “ cause divisions<sup>e</sup>;” to “ keep the unity of “ the Spirit in the bond of peace<sup>f</sup>.” On some of these occasions, the high importance of his subject warms him to more than even his wonted animation and earnestness of manner. “ Is Christ divided?” says he; “ was Paul crucified for you? or “ were ye baptized in the name of Paul<sup>g</sup>? ” “ If there be any consolation in Christ, if “ any comfort of love, if any fellowship of

rather than break the peace and unity of the Church, see Archdeacon Daubeny’s Guide to the Church, Appendix, p. 297—299. second edit.

<sup>b</sup> Heb. xiii. 7.

<sup>c</sup> Phil. iii. 16.

<sup>d</sup> Phil. i. 27.

<sup>e</sup> Rom. xvi. 17.

<sup>f</sup> Ephes. iv. 3.

<sup>g</sup> 1 Cor. i. 13.



“ the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, ful-  
“ fil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded,  
“ having the same love, being of one ac-  
“ cord, of one mind<sup>g</sup>. ”

Such a paramount importance does he attach to the peace and unity of the Church, that he allows no ordinary differences of opinion to afford the slightest pretext for divisions. Thus he is peculiarly earnest in his exhortations to accommodate our conduct to the prejudices of the <sup>h</sup> weaker brother: and his advice to the Philippians breathes the same Christian spirit of conciliation and peace. “ If in any thing ye  
“ be *otherwise* minded, God shall reveal  
“ even this unto you; nevertheless, where-  
“ to we have already attained, let us walk  
“ by the same rule, let us mind the same  
“ thing<sup>i</sup>. ”

Of the unhallowed source and heinous guilt of schism he suffers not a doubt to remain. “ Whereas,” says he, “ there is among  
“ you envying, and strife, and divisions, are

<sup>g</sup> Philip. ii. 1, 2.

<sup>h</sup> 1 Cor. viii. 9—13.

<sup>i</sup> Phil. iii. 15, 16.



“ ye not carnal, and walk as men? for while  
 “ one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am  
 “ of Apollos; are ye not carnal<sup>k</sup>? ” And  
 again in another passage he expressly enu-  
 merates, “ strifes, seditions, and heresies<sup>l</sup> ”  
 among those “ manifest works of the flesh,”  
 of which he declares, that “ they which do  
 “ such things shall not inherit the kingdom  
 “ of God.”

Here then let us pause, and derive for ourselves those obvious conclusions on the subject of schism, which even the most cursory review of the language of the Apostle cannot fail to suggest to us. In the first place, schism, although sometimes, no doubt, commencing in erroneous doctrine, and perhaps still more frequently leading to it, has<sup>m</sup> no indispensable connexion with it. The schismatical Corinthians are not even

<sup>k</sup> 1 Cor. iii. 3, 4.

<sup>l</sup> Gal. v. 19—21. Thus also St. Jude speaks of those “ who separate themselves, sensual, ( $\psi\chi\xi\omega\iota$ ), having “ not the Spirit.”

<sup>m</sup> Inter hæresim et schisma hoc interesse arbitrantur, quod hæresis perversum dogma habeat; schisma propter Episcopalem dissensionem ab Ecclesia separatur. *S. Hieron. in Epist. ad Tit. cap. iii.*



accused of any deviation from the correctness of their faith.—Again, "it is not necessary, in order to constitute the sin of schism, that men should have proceeded to an actual separation from the communion of a Church. A factious adherence to particular individuals or parties in religious matters, a neglect of subordination, or a violation of established order, are quite sufficient to substantiate the charge in the sense intended by the Apostle.—Lastly, we may learn to form a correct idea of the awful

" The truth and reasonableness of this position are amply illustrated by our daily experience. " It is easy," says Mr. Sikes, " to produce many instances of close connexion between the schismatic within the Church, and the formal separatist from it. Many who follow in crowds those who are styled Evangelical or Gospel preachers in the Church, are as regular attendants at the Meeting-house, dividing the sabbath between the Church and the Conventicle..... Societies have lately been formed of a mixture of schismatic members of the Church and regular Dissenters from it. Periodical works, Magazines, and Reviews are daily projected, of the same mixed nature, the effect of which is to pluck up those ancient fences which God has placed about his vineyard, and to lay it open to the attacks of the scorner and the infidel." *Discourse on Parochial Communion*, p. 88. note.



responsibility which attaches to the authors of those open ruptures, that avowed renunciation of all ecclesiastical authority, which mark the schisms of these days; when all the eloquence and all the earnestness of an inspired Apostle were called forth to express his holy indignation against offences of far inferior malignity;—offences which we might perhaps unwarily have been disposed to consider rather as schismatical propensities, than as actual schism; the mere dissensions of those who still held communion with each other.

If we are disposed to inquire, as in a case of such moment we naturally must be, how far the precepts and practice of our blessed Saviour tend to establish the conclusions thus derived from the authority of St. Paul;—it must in the first place be remarked, that the same preciseness of regulation and vehemence of remonstrance on these subjects, are not to be looked for at a period when the Church, as yet neither numerous nor regularly organized, exhibited none of those dissensions which could alone suggest them. The utmost



consistency of evidence may nevertheless be traced. What indeed can be more decisive than the example of Christ himself; his constant attendance on the service of the Jewish temple; his marked conformity to those very rites, which the purer worship of his own dispensation was so soon to supersede? what more consistent than his express commands to the same effect? “The Scribes and Pharisees,” says he, “sit in Moses’ seat: all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works<sup>r</sup>;” thus for ever establishing this important truth, that the personal character of the appointed minister of God interferes not with the validity of his sacred functions, and by consequence can supply no possible justification to those who venture to dispute his authority;

Not to dwell minutely on his numerous exhortations to love and forbearance and submission to lawful rule, at least let it not escape our notice, that in his last pathetic discourse with his Disciples, the point which

<sup>r</sup> Matt. xxiii. 2, 3.



he is the most solicitous to enforce, and which he labours to impress on their minds with such affectionate earnestness, is the necessity of a strict observance of the unity of his Church ; that his last bequest to them was “peace<sup>q</sup>;” his parting injunction, that they should “abide in him” as “branches” in “the true vine,” and “love one another” “as he had loved them;”—his last prayer, not only for his own immediate Disciples, “but for them also which should believe “on him through their word, that they all “might be one.”<sup>s</sup>

If it could be possible, by any further appeal to the sacred volume, to add weight to the arguments for Christian unity thus irresistibly arising from the express precepts of an inspired Apostle, and the last solemn injunctions of a dying Saviour, it must be by the following momentous consideration—that the general tenor of Scripture language appears to represent even our salvation as awarded to us, not in our separate and individual capacity, but as incorporated into

<sup>q</sup> John xiv. 27.

<sup>r</sup> John xv. 1—12.

<sup>s</sup> John xvii. 20, 21.



the fellowship of the Church. Thus, “ the Lord added to the *Church* daily such as should be saved<sup>t</sup>;” “ Christ loved the *Church*, and gave himself for it<sup>u</sup>. ” If we are assured that “ the branch cannot bear fruit, except it abide in the vine<sup>x</sup>, ” can we too anxiously avoid an unfruitful, a withered separation? If by baptism alone<sup>y</sup> we are admitted to the inestimable privileges of the Gospel covenant, and “ by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body<sup>z</sup>, ” how awful is the thought, how tremendous the hazard, lest by a wilful violation of the unity of that body, we become self-excluded from the benefits of that blessed sacrament!

That the sentiments of the Christian Church in the succeeding ages remained in perfect unison with the doctrines of Scripture, is abundantly testified by the writings of the Fathers. Their strong and decisive language on these subjects may well astonish the latitudinarian indifference and

<sup>t</sup> Acts ii. 47.      <sup>u</sup> Eph. v. 25.      <sup>x</sup> John xv. 4.

<sup>y</sup> “ Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” John iii. 5.

<sup>z</sup> 1 Cor. xii. 13.



schismatical prejudices of these degenerate days. “ Let no man deceive himself,” said St. Ignatius; “ if a man be not within the “ altar, he is deprived of the bread of “ God<sup>a</sup>. ” And again, “ Be not deceived, “ my brethren; if any man follow him “ who makes a schism, he inherits not the “ kingdom of God<sup>b</sup>. ” Not less decisive are expressions of the venerable Cyprian; “ He cannot have God for his father, who “ has not the Church for his mother<sup>c</sup>. ” “ He who holds not this unity, holds not “ the law of God, holds not the faith of “ the Father and the Son, and holds not “ life and salvation<sup>d</sup>. ” “ The inexpiable

<sup>a</sup> Μηδεὶς πλανάσθω ἐὰν μή τις ἢ ἐντὸς τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου,  
ὑστερεῖται τοῦ ἄρτου τοῦ Θεοῦ. - Ignatii Epist. ad Ephes.  
edit. Voss. p. 20.

<sup>b</sup> Μὴ πλανᾶσθε ἀδελφοί μου· εἴτις σχίζοντι ἀκολουθεῖ, βα-  
σιλεῖαν Θεοῦ οὐ κληρονομεῖ. Ad Philadelph. p. 40.

<sup>c</sup> Quisquis ab Ecclesia separatus adulterae jungitur, a  
promissis Ecclesiæ separatur. Nec perveniet ad Christi  
præmia, qui relinquit Ecclesiam Christi. Alienus est,  
prophanus est, hostis est. Habere jam non potest Deum  
patrem, qui Ecclesiam non habet matrem. Cyprian. de  
*Unit. Eccles.* edit. Baluzii, p. 195.

<sup>d</sup> Hanc unitatem qui non tenet, Dei legem non tenet,  
non tenet Patris et Filii fidem, vitam non tenet et salu-  
tem. Ibid. p. 196.



“ and heinous sin of discord is not cleansed  
 “ even by suffering. He cannot be a mar-  
 “ tyr who is not in the Church.” “ They  
 “ who do not come into the Church,” says  
 Irenæus, “ are not partakers of the Spirit,  
 “ but defraud themselves of life;—for where  
 “ the Church is, there is the Spirit of  
 “ God.” And the opinion of the pious  
 Chrysostom is, that “ nothing sharpens the  
 “ wrath of God so much as the divisions  
 “ of the Church.” The day would fail

e See above, p. 2. note b.

f Cujus (Spiritus) non sunt participes omnes, qui non concurrent ad Ecclesiam, sed semetipsos fraudant a vita, per sententiam malam, et operationem pessimam. Ubi enim Ecclesia, ibi Spiritus Dei; et ubi Spiritus Dei, illie Ecclesia, et omnis gratia; Spiritus autem veritas. *Irenæus*, lib. iii. cap. xl. edit. Grabe.

§ Οὐδὲν οὖτα παροξύνει τὸν Θεὸν ὡς τὸ ἐκκλησίαν διαιρεθῆναι. Chrysostom. in Epist. ad Ephes. cap. iv. Homil. xi. edit. Benedict. p. 86. Eusebius has preserved a letter from Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria, to the schismatical Novatian, strikingly illustrating the importance attached to unity by the early Christians. He says, “ One ought to suffer any thing whatever rather than “ divide the Church of God; and martyrdom endured “ for the sake of avoiding schism is not less glorious, “ than that which is undergone to avoid worshipping “ idols, but in my opinion even more so; for in the “ latter case a man becomes a martyr for his own soul



me, to lay before you the passages of similar import which might be cited from the Fathers of the Christian Church.

How striking is the contrast between those primitive ages and the times<sup>b</sup> on which

“alone; but in the former for the whole Church.” Ἐδει μὲν γὰρ καὶ πᾶν ὅτιοῦν παθεῖν, ὑπὲρ τοῦ μὴ διακόφαι τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ Θεοῦ. καὶ ήν οὐκ ἀδοξοτέρα, τῆς ἔνεκεν τοῦ μὴ εἰδωλολατρήσας γινομένης, ἡ ἔνεκεν τοῦ μὴ σχίσας μαρτυρία, κατ’ ἐμὲ δὲ καὶ μείζων. ἔχει μὲν γάρ ὑπὲρ μιᾶς τις τῆς ἑαυτοῦ ψυχῆς ἐνταῦθα δὲ ὑπὲρ ὅλης τῆς ἐκκλησίας μαρτυρεῖ. Euseb. Eccl. Hist. lib. vi. cap. 45.

<sup>b</sup> Notwithstanding the general propensity of modern times to overlook the guilt of schism, Divines have not been wanting in our Church who have expressed their sense of its heinousness, in terms sufficiently correspondent with the language of Scripture and of the primitive Fathers.—“If schism be an innocent thing, “and the true Catholic spirit, I have no more to say, “but that the whole Christian Church ever since the “Apostles’ times has been in a very great mistake. But “if schism be a very great sin, and that which will “damn us as soon as adultery and murder, then it must “needs be a dangerous thing to communicate with “schismatics.” *Resolution of some Cases of Conscience which respect Church Communion, by Dr. Sherlock; London Cases, p. 35.* “I would not be an heretic or “schismatic in the Church, to have the wisdom of Solomon, the tongues of St. Paul, and the eloquence of Apollos, no not to be caught up into Paradise and hear those unutterable things. I would not be the best preacher that ever was, and speak in the pulpit



our lot has fallen ! Not indeed that they stand distinctly and totally contrasted as the respective æras of unity and schism. Schisms there were, and schisms there must be, so long as pride and passion sway the heart of man ;—but those were not schisms lightly regarded ; they were ever viewed, as the Scripture teaches us to view them ; they were opposed with zeal and vigilance, and marked with appropriate reprobation. It was reserved to these “ latter days ” of indifference and compromise, for a crime to which the early Christians applied the epithet of *horrible*, ( $\phi\pi\kappa\omega\delta\eta\varsigma^i$ ), to pass unheeded among the most ordinary transactions of life; to be even upheld by some as conducive to the glory of God<sup>k</sup>; to be practised without remorse, and regarded without emotion.

“ by inspiration, to have that accusation lie against me,  
“ which St. Paul drew up against the Corinthians, of  
“ envy, strife, and schism.” *Hickes’s Posthumous Discourses*, Sermon vii.

<sup>i</sup> Literally, *what would cause one to shudder.*

\* “ Conclude then, that, if God be a rock, and his  
“ work is perfect; if variety be characteristic of all his  
“ works; an attempt to establish uniformity is revers-  
“ ing and destroying all the Creator’s glory.” *Kilham’s Methodist’s Monitor*, vol. ii. p. 6.



II. It must however after all be admitted, that sectaries, *in general at least*, have not proceeded to the infatuation or audacity of denying the criminality of schism;—their care has rather been so to interpret the commands of Scripture respecting the unity of the Church, as, if possible, to evade the charge.

Some have recourse to the notion of an invisible Church, and flatter themselves,

I " As the Church, with respect to that *internal relation* which it has to Christ, is called his *invisible Church*, so with respect to that *external polity*, in which it is empowered to act as a *visible society*, it is called his *visible Church*.....This *visible Church* being a society of Christ's appointment, no man can be esteemed to discharge his duty as his disciple, who is not a member of it. And, agreeably, all the benefits purchased by Christ for mankind are annexed to our initiation into this society. *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*.....And since our relation to the Catholic Church cannot otherwise appear, than by our communicating with some of those *particular Churches*, of which that general society is composed; it follows, that every Christian is under the same obligation to be a member of some *particular Church*, as to be a member of the Catholic Church of Christ.....The general ideas, which we affix to any person, when we consider him as a member of the whole or any part of Christ's *visible Church*, are, that he is entered into this society by *baptism*; professes the *faith* of the Christian reli-



that, under all the varieties of visible communion, they may still maintain their union inviolate with “the general assembly and “Church of the first-born, which are written “in heaven<sup>k</sup>!” But setting aside the absurdity, or rather the impossibility, of understanding the definite precepts of St. Paul in their application to any thing so indefinite and obscure as an invisible society;—is the scriptural use of the expression *Church* at all consistent with such an hypothesis? Are we to understand our Saviour’s directions thus; “Tell it to the” *invisible* “Church; If he neglect to hear the” *invisible* “Church!<sup>l</sup>” Were “Paul and “Barnabas brought on their way by the” *invisible* “Church<sup>m</sup>?“ Were the elders of Ephesus commanded to “feed the” *invisible* “Church of God, over which the “Holy Ghost” must consistently have “made them” *invisible* “overseers<sup>n</sup>?“

“gion taught in it; communicates in the *external ordinances*, and is observant of the *discipline* of it.” *Rogers on the Visible and Invisible Church*, p. 27—30. fourth edition.

<sup>k</sup> Heb. xii. 23.

<sup>l</sup> Matt. xviii. 7.

<sup>m</sup> Acts xv. 3.

<sup>n</sup> Acts xx. 28.



And when Christ likens his kingdom to  
“ tares sowed among the wheat<sup>o</sup>;” to “a net  
“ that was cast into the sea, and gathered of  
“ every kind<sup>p</sup>;” to “a wedding filled with  
“ guests both good and bad<sup>q</sup>;” shall we  
confound these descriptions, marked as they  
are by the strongest images of mixture and  
alloy, with “the heavenly Jerusalem, an in-  
“ numerable company of angels, and the  
“ spirits of just men made perfect<sup>r</sup>? ” Rather  
let us beware of so dangerous a confusion of  
ideas on the subject, so essentially distinct,

<sup>o</sup> Matt. xiii. 5.

<sup>p</sup> Matt. xiii. 47.

<sup>q</sup> Matt. xxii. 10.

<sup>r</sup> Heb. xii. 22, 23.

<sup>s</sup> That body (the invisible Church) consisteth of none  
“ but only true Israelites, true sons of Abraham, true  
“ servants and saints of God. Howbeit, of the visible  
“ body and Church of Jesus Christ, those may be, and  
“ oftentimes are, in respect of the main parts of their  
“ outward profession, who in regard of their inward  
“ disposition of mind, yea, of external conversation,  
“ yea, even of some parts of their very profession, are  
“ most worthily both hateful in the sight of God him-  
“ self, and in the eyes of the sounder part of the visible  
“ Church most execrable.” *Hooker's Ecclesiastical Poli-  
ty*, book iii. Oxford edit. vol. i. p. 353. “ For lack of  
“ diligent observing the difference, first between the  
“ Church of God mystical and visible, then between the  
“ visible, sound and corrupted, sometimes more, some-



and be disposed to apprehend, with the pious and learned Pearson, that “that Church alone which first began at Jerusalem on earth, will bring us to the Jerusalem in heaven.”

Others again there are, who feeling compelled to understand the injunctions of Scripture in their application to the outward unity of the Church, nevertheless contrive to explain away their import, till they have brought them down to the level of their own peculiar views. They are willing to hope that they have sufficiently complied with the spirit of these injunctions, by maintaining communion with the sect, or even perhaps the particular congregation, to which they may have attached themselves; for that “where” even “two or three are gathered together in Christ’s name, there he “is in the midst of them.” As if it were not a most unjustifiable perversion of Scripture

“times less, the oversights are neither few nor light  
“that have been committed.” *Ibid.* p. 354.

<sup>1</sup> Pearson on the Creed, Article ix. *The Holy Catholic Church*, p. 527, 8vo. edit.

<sup>u</sup> Matt. xviii. 20.



language, to consider this passage and a few others of similar complexion<sup>x</sup>, as necessarily applicable to persons assembled in complete independence on the unity of Christ's Church, when the unvarying tenor of holy writ represents the Church of Christ as one undivided body, and of course leads us to the obvious conclusion, that the obligations to unity amongst its members will admit of no interpretation less extensive.

Some, again, have attempted to defend

<sup>x</sup> Such as Rom. xvi. 5. and Philemon 2.

y "It will be necessary for the understanding of the nature of the Church which is thus one, to consider in what that unity doth consist. And being it is an aggregation not only of many persons, but also of many congregations, the unity thereof must consist in some agreement of them all, and adhesion to something which is one. If then we reflect upon the first Church again, which we found constituted in the Acts, and to which all others since have been in a manner added and conjoined, we may collect from their union and agreement how all other Churches are united and agree. Now they were described to be believing and baptized persons, converted to the faith by St. Peter, continuing stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. These then were all built upon the same Rock, all professed the same faith, all received the same sacraments, all per-



their schismatical resistance to ecclesiastical rule, by the wild and extravagant idea, that in the kingdom of Christ he alone is King<sup>z</sup>, and consequently sole Lawgiver to his subjects, and that every claim of men to authority in his kingdom is an infringement on his sovereignty. But does not Christ avowedly govern his kingdom by delegation? “As

“formed the same devotions, and thereby were all re-  
“puted members of the same Church.” *Pearson on the  
Creed*, p. 510, 8vo. edit.

<sup>z</sup> Thus Bishop Hoadly argues; “As the Church of  
“Christ is the kingdom of Christ, he himself is King;  
“and in this it is implied that he is himself the sole  
“Lawgiver to his subjects, and himself the sole Judge  
“of their behaviour in the affairs of conscience and sal-  
“vation.” *Sermon on the Kingdom or Church of Christ*,  
p. 10.

“Now if the word *king* does not necessarily imply  
“the same power in every kingdom, how can there be  
“any conclusion, that because Christ is King of his  
“kingdom, he is sole Lawgiver to his subjects?.....The  
“only way to know the constitution of this kingdom,  
“is not to reason from what is implied in the words  
“*king* and *kingdom*, for they do not imply any fixed or  
“absolute sense, but from the laws and institutions of  
“it, whether they admit of or require the authority of  
“under-magistrates. Thus if it appears that Christ has  
“commissioned others to act in his name, to exercise  
“authority in his kingdom, and govern his subjects  
“in such a manner as he has commissioned them to



“ the Father hath sent me, so send I you<sup>a</sup>;” and again, “ He that heareth you heareth “ me; and he that despiseth me despiseth “ him that sent me<sup>b</sup>. ” Is the power of an earthly monarch supposed to be invaded by the acts of authority exerted in his name by vicegerents of his own appointment? Will he escape the charge of rebellion against his sovereign, whose resistance has been immediately directed against his vice-gerent only? But our argument even suffers by this comparison. For, as Leslie has well observed, “ the person of God is far “ exalted above the attempts of angels as “ well as men; and to invade his *person* is “ a thought too foolish for a man, much “ more for an angel of heaven.....There is “ no other way of rebelling against God, “ but by opposing his institutions<sup>c</sup>. ”

“ govern; is it any answer to this to say, that the Church “ is a kingdom, and Christ is a King, and consequently “ sole Lawgiver in it? Is there nothing in this text, “ *Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in hea-* “ *ven, because Christ is King of his Church?* ” *Law’s Third Letter to Bishop Hoadly, Scholar Armed*, vol. i. p. 389, 390.

<sup>a</sup> John xx. 21.

<sup>b</sup> Luke x. 16.

<sup>c</sup> Leslie’s Rehearsals, No. 54.



Others, again, have gone so far as to resolve all our obligations to Christian unity into those ties of universal charity<sup>a</sup> and good-will, which should, and, as they contend, may, subsist between Christians of every denomination; by which they would insinuate, that, although variance is criminal, actual separation is not. But, setting aside the impossibility of so understanding the precepts, to “walk by the same rule,”

<sup>a</sup> Dr. Campbell appears to have embraced this opinion. Observing that St. Paul applies the term *schism* to the Corinthian dissensions, which did not amount to actual separation, he considers it to imply no more than the violation of that union of affection which should subsist among Christians; and takes occasion to remark, that “schism, in scriptural use, is one thing, and schism “in ecclesiastical use, another.” His insinuation is obvious. But it must be at least equally obvious, that, if St. Paul applied the term to those minor differences, he must, *a fortiori*, have done so to positive separations, had they occurred. It cannot, however, after this, be matter of astonishment, that Dr. Campbell should be led to conclude, that “no person, who, in the spirit of candor “and charity, adheres to that which, to the best of his “judgment, is right, though in this opinion he should be “mistaken, is, in the scriptural sense, either schismatique “or heretic.” See two preliminary dissertations on Schism and Heresy.—*Campbell on the Gospels*, third edit. vol. ii. p. 104—141.



“to speak the same thing,” in short, the general language of Scripture on the subject; are they not contending for a system directly subversive of that very charity which they profess to admire? Of all the strifes incidental to mankind, those which have originated in religious separation have invariably exceeded in bitterness and malignity: witness the rancorous enmity of the Jews and Samaritans of old, and the tenfold horrors of those religious persecutions, which have, at times, depopulated the Christian world. “I know,” (says an eminent Divine<sup>c</sup>) “that men will now say, that they can love all parties, and that they can live without animosities towards all sorts of men; but if a few men can be so perfect, what is that to the generality of mankind, who will still be divided in *affections*, as they are in parties and communions, as has been found by woeful experience, not only in this Church, but all the Churches where divisions have been since the time of Christ.”

What should we think of his attainments

<sup>c</sup> Hickes's Posthumous Sermons.



in moral or political science, who should resolve all the duties prescribed to us as subjects, as fellow-citizens, and as men, into the vague and indeterminate principle of philanthropy? When the spirit of turbulence and disaffection shall lose its characters of guilt, upon assuming the more definite form of mutiny or rebellion; when malice and hatred, however criminal in the outset, shall innocently vent themselves in outrage and murder; then, but not before, will religious variance become perfectly blameless in the sight of God and man, so soon as it shall have advanced to the decisive point of declared disobedience and open separation.

If, however, the duty of remaining in communion with the one universal Church of Christ be thus indispensable, it becomes a most momentous question, how, in the present diffusion of Christianity, this communion is to be preserved; and how a Christian, amid the variety of forms under which his religion is presented to his notice, may be reasonably satisfied of the correctness of his course.



In the first place, it must be evident, that the measure of his duty, with respect to this, as well as every other command of God, is only coextensive with his opportunities of obedience. The natural obstacles to an intimate connexion between distant regions, and those political divisions and occasional hostilities, which as effectually disunite the more contiguous, unavoidably separate the Church of Christ into distinct branches, varying, of course, more or less, in their discipline and forms, and indeed in all those minor circumstances which depend on human regulation. But these may, nevertheless, be safely considered as in communion<sup>f</sup> with

<sup>f</sup> "Any two Churches of different nations are always supposed to be in communion, and not in a schism, so long as they differ not in fundamentals, because it is supposed that the members of one of these would, (in case they were to travel into the other nation,) for unity's sake, communicate with the other. But when people of the same place, city, parish, &c. do *actually* separate, and renounce communion with the Church when they are on the spot, this plea cannot be used in their case. To say, these are not schismatics, because they differ not in fundamentals, is to put a new meaning on the word *schism*;—they are not heretics in-



each other, as well as with the Church universal, so long as they agree in the grand essentials of Christianity; that is, in professing the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, and in administering the Sacraments by the hands of a priesthood regularly commissioned by an authority derived from the Apostles. He therefore, whose happiness it is to have been placed within the limits of such a Church, has the best reason to be confident, that, by his conformity to it, he maintains, as far as in him lies, his <sup>g</sup> communion with the Church uni-

“ deed, (as the Church-use has now distinguished the  
“ use of those words,) but the Donatists, Novatians, &c.  
“ have always been accounted schismatics, though they  
“ differed not in essentials.” *Wall's History of Infant  
Baptism*, vol. ii. p. 419. fourth edit.

g “ So many regions as there are under heaven, that  
“ do truly profess the Christian name, so many national  
“ Churches there are. In all these nations there are  
“ many provincial, in all those provinces many diocesan,  
“ in all those dioceses many parochial churches; in all  
“ those parishes many Christian families, in all those  
“ families many Christian souls. Now all those souls,  
“ families, parishes, dioceses, provinces, nations, make  
“ up but one Catholic Church upon earth. The God of  
“ the Church cannot abide either conventicles of separa-  
“ ration, or pluralities of professions, or appropriations



versal; whilst those, on the other hand, who, under similar advantages, have fallen into separation, are as manifestly guilty of the sin of schism.

Since, however, upon the principles now contended for, there cannot be more than one Church in one place, the question arises, how a man may safely regulate his choice amid the various and conflicting claims to his religious attachment, with which he finds himself surrounded.

The most obvious rule, as well as the

“ of Catholicism.....Neither difference of time nor distance of place, nor rigour of unjust censure, nor any unessential error, can bar an interest in this blessed unity. As this flourishing Church of Great Britain (after all the spiteful calumnies of malicious men) is one of the most conspicuous members of the Catholic upon earth; so we in her communion do make up one body with the holy Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors, and faithful Christians of all ages and times; we succeed in their faith, we glory in their succession, we triumph in their glory. Whither go ye then, ye weak, ignorant, seduced souls, that run to seek this dove in a foreign cote? She is here, if she have any nest under heaven. Let me never have part in her or in heaven, if any Church in the world have more part in the Universal.” *Bishop Hall's Works*, folio, vol. ii. p. 310.



safest, is this ; to adhere, if possible, to the form of religion which he finds established by the laws of his country<sup>h</sup>. This advantage, at least, will attend his peaceable conformity, that, should no fundamental error have corrupted the system, by his adherence to it, he is at once obeying the ordinances of God and the laws of man ;— whilst, on the other hand, his wilful separation must be considered as including the complicated guilt of schism with respect to the Church, and disaffection to the State. Ill disposed must he be to “ follow after the “ things that make for peace<sup>i</sup>,” whose

<sup>h</sup> “ There is one plain rule to direct all men in this inquiry; that wherever there is a Church established by public authority, if there be nothing sinful in its constitution and worship, we are bound to communicate with that Church, and to reject the communion of all other parties and sects of *Christians*. For the advantage always lies on the side of authority. No public establishment can justify a sinful communion ; but if there be nothing sinful in the communion of the national Church, which is established by public authority, to separate from such a Church is both disobedience to the supreme authority in the State, and a schism from the Church.” *Resolution of some Cases of Conscience which respect Church Communion*, by Dr. Sherlock, *Dean of St. Paul’s; London Cases*, p. 31.

<sup>i</sup> Rom. xiv. 19.



heart is insensible to the native wish, the honest prejudice, of maintaining communion with that religious society which his country sanctions and supports; and it is, in fact, his duty so to do, until he is decidedly convinced, that he thereby violates a superior obligation<sup>k</sup>. Now this is a conviction with which his conscience cannot

<sup>k</sup> " When a lawgiver names some particular exceptions of cases in which the law shall not oblige, that law binds the stronger in all cases not excepted; for it is supposed, if there had been any more, he would have named them too. The Scripture gives a very positive law against separations; it excepts some cases; and it must be a very presumptuous thing to add any more of them of our own heads; they are these:—

" 1. If a Church do practise idolatry.—St. Paul, warning the Corinthians of the heathen idolaters, says, ' Come out from among them, and be ye separate.'.....

" 2. If a Church teach doctrines encouraging any wickedness,.....or destructive of the fundamentals of the Christian faith.—St. Paul commands Timothy to " shun them, for their word will eat as a canker.'.....

" 3. The Scripture commands that no sin be committed to obtain any purpose ever so good.....A Church that will not admit us without our doing a thing that is wicked, or declaring and subscribing something that is false, does thereby thrust us out of her communion.....

" 4. If



fairly be impressed, until he seriously believes that the Church has corrupted the essential doctrines, or deserted the fundamental ordinances, of the Gospel; that she requires something false as an article of faith, or enforces some practice subversive of the institutions of God.

Hence, as we have already seen grounds to infer, none of the ordinary differences of opinion<sup>1</sup> on those doubtful and less material points, which affect not the salvation of

“4. If a Church be schismatical.....‘Mark those  
“who cause divisions, &c.’

“These exceptions I find in Scripture, and I know of  
“no more that reach to Churches.....He that sepa-  
“rates from any Church upon any ground, except one  
“of these four, ought to take heed, and be well assured  
“that he find his ground in the Scripture.” *Wall's History of Infant Baptism*, fourth edit. vol. ii. p. 421,  
422.

<sup>1</sup> The strict declarations or subscriptions, which it is usual for all well-ordered Churches to require of their Clergy, offer no contradiction to this conclusion. The laity are not called upon to make them. Surely then nothing short of opinions fundamentally heretical could incapacitate a layman from conscientiously joining in the worship of any Church even tolerably free from corruption. See this point ably discussed, in the Case of Lay-Communion, by Dr. Williams, Bishop of Chichester; London Cases, p. 60—87.



the soul ; no disgust at the personal failings of her ministers, which, by God's grace, affect not the efficacy of their sacred ministrations, and which, were the objection admissible, as “ we have this treasure in earthen vessels<sup>m</sup>, ” might undoubtedly have been urged against the purest Church which has yet existed among men ; no pretence to superior<sup>n</sup> edification under other and more gifted teachers, a plea which must eventu-

<sup>m</sup> 2 Cor. iv. 7.

<sup>n</sup> “ Men have sometimes taken sudden heats and warmth for true edification. When melting tones, affectionate expressions, solemn looks and behaviour, passion and vehemency, and other arts, have played upon the fancy, and put their constitutions into different motions, some have thought themselves so strangely edified, as though it was the impulse and powerful acting of the Divine Spirit ; which, many times, is no more than a bright or a lowering day can do, acting upon the animal spirits.....When they themselves were pleased and in good humour, God was reconciled ; and when they were dull and heavy, the Spirit was withdrawn ; and according as these heats and bodily passions were stirred, so the ministry was edifying or unprofitable : pale cheeks and hollow looks have been counted signs of grace, and the dis-eases of their body passed for the virtue of their mind.” *Discourse on Edification, by Dr. Hascard, Dean of Windsor; London Cases, p. 461.*



ally be referred, not so much to truth and sound doctrine, as to the wantonness of partiality, and the caprices of individual persuasion; none of these reasons, nor all of them combined, however plausible they may appear to the superficial view, can justify, even in the slightest degree, a departure from her communion.

But further, it is sufficiently evident, that, besides those inseparable characteristics of a true Church, which have been immutably ordained by Christ himself, and the absence of which would fix the guilt of schism, not on him who separates, but on those whose corruptions have made his separation a duty, numberless regulations of inferior moment, connected with the discipline and good order of a Church, must of necessity be confided to the discretion of men. The limits of this discretion may be considered as defined in the Apostle's precept, "Let all things be done decently, and in order."<sup>o</sup> But order and decency, in cases where uniformity of opinion is manifestly impossible, can only be maintained by the

<sup>o</sup> 1 Cor. xiv. 40.



peaceable submission of private judgment to public authority.

No persuasion therefore, that the peculiar institutions of a Church are capable of improvement, that her Liturgy, perhaps, might be rendered more edifying, her forms more significant, her observances more appropriate, or her discipline more efficacious, can offer any reasonable pretext for dissent. Shall a man, indeed, venture on the criminal and tremendous alternative of schism, to escape from usages in themselves indifferent, on which no two individuals, perhaps, could be found exactly to coincide in opinion, and which in all their probable varieties affect not the momentous question of human salvation? “The ‘unity of the faith,’ says St. Augustine<sup>r</sup>, ‘may be held with different observances, ‘which are no impediment to the truth.

<sup>r</sup> Sit ergo una fides universæ, quæ ubique dilatatur, Ecclesiæ, tanquam intus in membris, etiam si ipsa fidei unitas quibusdam diversis observationibus celebratur, quibus nullo modo quod in fide verum est, impeditur. Omnis enim pulchritudo filiæ regis intrinsecus, illæ autem observationes, quæ varie celebrantur, in ejus veste intelliguntur. *Augustin. Epist. 86. edit. Lovaniens.*



“ The beauty of the King’s daughter is  
“ within, and these various observances  
“ are but her vesture.”

III. And now if the language of Scripture on the subject of Christian unity has been correctly represented, and the conclusions to which we have been led, with respect to the nature and measure of our obligations on this important point, have been fairly deduced from thence, in what light shall we be disposed to regard the melancholy state of religious disorganization into which we have fallen, the almost unprecedented increase of schism which we witness, and the frivolous distinctions for which so many profess, even on principle, to have deserted the venerable Church of their forefathers?

I would not be supposed to condemn separation as such, where a thorough difference of opinion with respect to any of the fundamental doctrines or ordinances of Christianity, however erroneous and untenable it may be, yet seems by a kind of unhappy necessity to lead to separation as its inevitable consequence. Decided hetero-



doxy, deplorable as it is in itself, and not unfrequently vicious in its origin, may nevertheless be considered as a plausible, nay even a conscientious cause of schism. Accordingly, it is not to be expected that those amongst us, who have ventured to discard from their religious system the sacramental ordinances of Christ, should even think of uniting with a Church, into whose fellowship one sacrament must admit them, and of whose communion the other forms so prominent a feature. And those again, who are so unhappy as to misconceive the plain evidences for the Divinity of our blessed Saviour, and for the Atonement wrought by him for the sins of fallen man, may well be spared the unprofitable disgust of hypocritically conforming to a Liturgy, of which the Atonement and the Divinity of Christ form the pervading principle, the animating spirit. In the case of such persons, separation is clearly unavoidable; though it highly concerns them to be well assured, that no wilful abuse of their faculties, no culpable negligence, no unjustifiable prejudices, have contributed to fix them in opinions, which,



when once adopted, form an invincible barrier to all communion with the Church of Christ. But it is not for us to “judge them “that are without<sup>q</sup>,” happily both for them and for ourselves, “them that are without “God judgeth<sup>r</sup>.”

It is to a far more numerous and formidable body of schismatics, that the arguments here adduced may be considered more especially to apply; consisting principally of the three well known denominations of Protestant Dissenters, and of that more modern sect, whose rapid advancement in numerical consequence is among the more alarming signs of these times. And here it is, if the arguments which have been advanced are not altogether void of consistency and soundness, that the charge of schism must rest in all its force.

Their cases, as far as relates to this charge, are in general too similar to require a separate discussion. Admitting and professing, without any material variation, all those fundamental truths which our Church considers as essential to salva-

<sup>q</sup> 1 Cor. v. 12.

<sup>r</sup> 1 Cor. v. 13.



tion, they have nevertheless forsaken her communion. And so far indeed as they even deem it requisite to assign any reason at all for their separation—so far, that is, as they have not adopted the extravagant notions of religious liberty which now prevail, of their absolute and unqualified right to worship God as best suits their wayward fancies—the objections on which they ground their vindication are either similar to those whose insufficiency has already been exposed, or even still more glaringly futile and unreasonable. Diversities of opinion on points not clearly revealed;—objections to ecclesiastical authority altogether, or to that peculiar modification of it to which their submission is required, or even to the support and protection held forth to the Church by the piety of the civil magistrate;—a pretence of seeking a more enlightened and more spiritual ministry;—a preference for extemporary preaching and prayer;—infinite exceptions against particular expressions and forms and observances, even down to a capricious prejudice against a garment or a posture;—these, and such as these, are the pleas which have



jointly and severally been urged as fully vindicating, nay rather as imperiously demanding a separation from our Church;— and thus mistaking the corrupt workings of pride and passion, or the wanton extravagances of fancy, for the sober dictates of a conscience rightly informed, men have laboured to persuade others, and have too frequently succeeded in persuading themselves, that they have broken “the bond of “ peace” for conscience sake.

What should we say of the loyalty of that subject or citizen, who, from motives analogous to these, should desert the land which gave him birth, associate himself with her inveterate enemies, and support their cause against her? The universal severity of human laws towards such offenders sufficiently evinces the sense which mankind have of the nature of the offence; whilst the impunity which attends the religious deserter will scarcely allow us to perceive and confess that the cases are but too strictly parallel<sup>s</sup>.

<sup>s</sup> “ It is remarkable, that not merely the first ecclesiastical writers, but the Apostles themselves, did almost uniformly employ such terms in speaking of



Of all the pleas for separation from our Church which may be classed with those just mentioned, that which is founded on the rejection of infant baptism may perhaps be considered as wearing the most plausible aspect; but its validity is surely inadmissible.—The language of Scripture is no where sufficiently explicit, with respect to the period of administering baptism, to justify us in ranking it among those fundamental articles of our religion, in defence of which we are bound to embrace the serious alternative of separation. Such at least was the verdict of the Church in the primitive ages<sup>t</sup>; so at least have judged some even of the modern Antipædobaptists<sup>u</sup> themselves,

“ divisions in the Church, as are used by civil historians  
“ to describe divisions in the State.....This could only  
“ have been in order to direct us to measure our notions  
“ of ecclesiastical schism by the analogy of civil rebellion.....The constant use of the words στάσις, ἐρις,  
“ διχοτασιαι, &c. in the writings of the Apostles and of  
“ the Apostolic Fathers, must have struck every body  
“ who has read them with the least attention.” Nott’s  
*Banpton Lectures*, p. 101, 102.

<sup>t</sup> See authority for this cited by Wall, Hist. of Infant Baptism, vol. ii. p. 424, 425.

<sup>u</sup> Ibid. p. 426—432.



maintaining communion with our Church, notwithstanding their opinion, and strongly reprobating the idea of separating for any such cause. Till an actual prohibition of infant baptism can be clearly pointed out in Scripture, or fairly inferred from thence, separation on such grounds cannot be justified, for “ where no law is, there is no “ transgression.”

If schism indeed be a sin of such magnitude, as we have on scriptural and primitive authority been led to conclude, how can any thing short of the enforcement of unquestionably sinful terms of communion reasonably induce us to incur the awful responsibility of separation? And again, if any thing <sup>x</sup> not actually criminal in the faith

<sup>v</sup> Rom. iv. 15.

<sup>x</sup> “ If any thing less than sinful terms of Communion can justify a separation, then there can be no end of separations, and Catholic Communion is an impossible and impracticable notion ; that is, the Church of Christ neither is one body, nor can be. For if men are not bound to communicate with a Church, which observes our Saviour’s institutions, without any such corrupt mixtures as make its communion sinful, then there is no bounds to be set to the fancies of men, but they may new-model Churches, and divide and subdivide



and practice of the Church can justify us in withdrawing from her communion, how can any determinate principles of Christian unity be established at all; how can we form any tolerable and practical idea where lawful separation ends, and criminal schism begins?

Having reserved the discussion of Episcopacy to another lecture, I have purposely avoided all direct reference to its superior and exclusive pretensions. All that I would at present assume, as being in fact all that my argument requires, and all that is necessary towards demonstrating the guilt of schism, in a country like this, where the Establishment is episcopal, is, that Episcopacy is at least a lawful form of ecclesiastical government; a position which the most hardy of our adversaries would scarcely venture to controvert. For those who reject the idea of a divinely instituted priesthood, cannot refuse to Episcopacy its fair claim to consideration among the human devices for the regular organization of a Church;

“without any end.” *Dr. Sherlock on Church Communion; London Cases*, p. 33.



and even the most strenuous Presbyterian must pause, ere he condemn as unlawful, that ministry, through which alone for fifteen centuries his own must trace its claims to its Divine commission. Shall conscience then be pleaded by those amongst us, who refuse submission to episcopal authority? As well might the theoretical republican pretend, that he could not in conscience render obedience to a monarchical government. The unruliness of pride and the prejudices of discontent may, no doubt, impel the one to schism, or the other to rebellion; but to plead conscience as a justification, must in either case be equally and most glaringly a profanation of the term.

In vain may the sectary plead, (as many perhaps might be disposed to do,) that he is not guilty of the sin of schism, for that he has merely followed the example of his parents; has only continued in the persuasion in which he was educated. This may indeed help to account for his offence; but if it be deemed a justification of it, what crime may not be justified? In vain may



he urge the actual necessity of schism; that St. Paul has declared that “there must be “heresies, that they which are approved “might be made manifest”;”—that to schism we are indebted for the invaluable works of the primitive Fathers, and even for no inconsiderable portion of the sacred volume;—that the mutual jealousy of contending sects has essentially contributed to preserve the holy Scriptures in their original purity; and that without diversities of opinion to enliven the zeal of men, religion herself must soon be lost in apathy and indifference. All this may be strictly true, without supplying the separatist with the slightest justification. “It must be that “offences come,”” and yet the same high authority adds, “woe be to him by whom “they come.” The violence and injustice of the wicked are among those “fiery “trials<sup>a</sup>,” which but the more effectually prepare the faithful servants of God for that “glory which shall be revealed here-“after”.<sup>b</sup> Yet who ever ventured on that

y 1 Cor. xi. 19.

a 1 Pet. iv. 12.

z Luke xvii. 1.

b 1 Pet. v. 1.



account to palliate those crimes? If the wisdom and mercy of the Almighty rejoices in bringing good out of evil, will the end justify the means? shall we “do evil that ‘good may come?’”

In laying down thus strictly the principles of Christian unity, far be it from us to pronounce a rash and unwarrantable condemnation on those who appear to have violated it. To express a decided opinion with respect to the nature of a sin, and to pass sentence on sinners, are things widely different. The former may be in many cases an imperious duty; the latter, so far from being a duty, is a presumptuous invasion of the prerogative of Heaven. He must have formed a most inadequate conception of the force of education and example and early habit, who is not convinced of the extreme difficulty of effecting an emancipation from their influence in all cases, and most of all, perhaps, in matters of religious persuasion;—and where men have sinned, like St. Paul, “ignorantly in ‘unbelief’,” who shall presume to doubt,



that, like him also, they may obtain mercy ? But if, in the exuberance of mistaken liberality, we proceed to confound extenuation with innocence, and excuse with absolute justification, until we arrive even at a practical doubt of the very existence of criminal separation, we are adopting a principle which would equally justify every vice to which men could claim an inheritance, or for which custom and example could furnish a plausible apology. Such charity is neither rational nor scriptural ; such candour but a more imposing name for profane indifference.

But whatever allowance charity may demand for the errors of others, in our own cases we cannot be too clear-sighted or too scrupulous ;—we cannot, I had almost said, be too uncharitable ; and where the object is to establish correct rules for our own practice, to inform the ignorant and unwary, to confirm the wavering, and to reclaim those whose prejudices are yet open to argument and conviction, we cannot surely be too decided or too explicit.

Of the soundness of the principles which



it has been attempted to establish, and of the importance of enforcing them, the very features usually assumed by schism, and the dangers to which it manifestly tends, afford the most impressive illustration. The futility of the grounds on which separation has often been adopted;—the general ignorance even of those grounds observable in such multitudes of sectaries;—the perpetuation of prejudice and animosity, even where the original causes of division have been long since forgotten;—the perverted <sup>d</sup> in-

<sup>d</sup> “In a separation every thing is aggravated to the widening of the gap, as we see by constant and woful experience; a separate party never thinks itself far enough off from any terms of reconciliation.” *Wall*, vol. ii. p. 438. St. Jerome observes, “Nullum schisma non sibi aliquam confingit hæresim, ut recte ab Ecclesia recessisse videatur.” *S. Hieron. Comm. in Epist. ad Tit. cap. 3. edit. Benedict. vol. iv. p. 439.* Vincentius makes a similar remark; “Quis unquam hæreses instituit, nisi qui se prius ab Ecclesiae Catholice, universaliter et antiquitatis consensione discreverit?..... Satis evidenter perspicueque monstratur, hoc apud omnes fere hæreses quasi solenne esse ac legitimum, ut semper prophanis novitatibus gaudeant, antiquitatis scita fastidiant, et per oppositiones falsi nominis scientiae a fide naufragent.” *Contra Hæreses. cap. 34.*



genuity with which new distinctions have been invented to give plausibility to a desperate cause;—the endless subdivisions of communion, and variations of doctrine, naturally consequent on deserting the true standard of unity;—the extreme jealousy of these divisions in their own particular congregations, evinced by sectarian leaders, and the earnestness with which they soon learn to reprobate the very sin with which themselves are manifestly chargeable;—the gloomy, the unsocial, the discontented spirit of nonconformity, and its obvious tendency to connect itself with

“ Baxter, himself a disturber of the unity of the Church, inveighed against schism in the strongest terms. “It is my calling,” says he, “to help to save “people from their sins, and Church division is a heap “of sins.” *Cure of Church Divisions*, Preface. “He “that is out of the Church is without the teaching, “the holy worship, the prayers, and the discipline of “the Church, and is out of the way where the Spirit “doth come; and out of the society which Christ is “specially related to; for he is the Saviour of his body, “and if we once leave his hospital, we cannot expect “the cure and help of the Physician. Nor will he be “a Pilot to them who forsake his ship, nor a Captain “to them who separate from his army. Out of this “Ark there is nothing but a deluge, and no place of rest “or safety for a soul.” *Ibid.* p. 68.



'political disaffection ; these are traits of schism no less notorious, than they are illustrative of its source and nature.

But it is connected with positive evils still more deplorable, and hazards still more alarming. For notwithstanding the good purposes to which the divisions of the Christian world may fairly be considered to have been occasionally subservient, in rousing men to renewed vigilance and more lively zeal in the cause of religion ; I apprehend that in our own case, as indeed in every other case where religious divisions have passed the limits of moderation, so far from having grounds to flatter ourselves with the hope of such favourable results, we have too much reason to dread consequences of the most opposite description. Can we in-

<sup>1</sup> The truth of James the First's well-known adage, "No Bishop, no King," was wofully experienced by his unhappy son. And we must be invincibly blind to the signs of the times, if we do not perceive that the rapid and unprecedented increase of defection from our communion has gone hand in hand with a growing spirit of political innovation. The connexion between them is (as a general rule at least) natural and necessary. The same unruly and turbulent passions are the common source of both.



deed hesitate to believe, that the multiplied and scandalous dissensions of the professors of the Gospel have a powerful tendency to confirm the prejudices of the sceptical, and bewilder the judgment of the weak ;—to produce a prevailing impression, that it is a matter of absolute indifference, which of all the various forms of religious worship we may adopt for ourselves ;—and then, by a chain of consequences too closely linked together, first, a contempt for all the externals of religion, and finally, for religion herself?

Should we, however, fail to recognise any universal and necessary connexion between religious divisions and sceptical profligacy ; one principle, at least, we must admit to have been long arrayed in formidable hostility against us ; one truth, at least, is beyond dispute ;—that dissensions, whether civil or religious, if carried beyond certain limits, must of necessity be fatal to the community which has admitted them, that a “ kingdom ” thoroughly “ divided against itself cannot stand.”

If such, then, be the tremendous crisis too

§ Mark iii. 24.



probably to be apprehended from the unhappy divisions of our Church, it becomes us, not only to wish and to “pray for the “peace of” this our “Jerusalem<sup>h</sup>,” but to combine our most strenuous exertions in support of her sacred cause; to temper an avowed decision of principle with that charity and conciliation in practice, which may tend, by God’s blessing, to restore her to harmony and accord, and make her once more, so far as human frailties will allow, “as a city that is at unity in itself<sup>i</sup>. ”

“ And who,” said the venerable and pious Bishop Andrews<sup>k</sup>, at a period when our Church wore an aspect of dissension and danger too fearfully analogous to the present,—“ who shall make us of one “accord? High shall be his reward in “heaven, and happy his remembrance on “earth, that shall be the means to restore “this accord to the Church;—that once “we may keep a true and perfect Pente-“cost,” when the disciples of Christ “were “all with one accord in one place<sup>l</sup>. ”

<sup>h</sup> Psalm exxii. 6.

<sup>i</sup> Psalm exxii. 3.

<sup>k</sup> Sermons, p. 384, fifth edition,

<sup>l</sup> Acts ii. 1.



## SERMON III.

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JOHN xx. 21.

*As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.*

IN further prosecuting the consideration of the claims of our excellent Church to the undivided attachment of the people of these kingdoms, and of the unreasonableness of deserting her communion, the next point which naturally presents itself is the outward form of that polity which our blessed Saviour and his holy Apostles instituted for his Church. For if it shall appear that our own ecclesiastical institutions are formed on that primitive model, our pretensions to being regarded as a sound and undoubted branch of the one universal Church must receive a most material confirmation; and the force of those arguments which have already been derived from a general review of the obligations to Christian unity, and the guilt of schism,



must be augmented in a similar proportion.

The *two* leading positions which it is my present object to establish are these:—*first*, that the form of government under which the Apostles placed and left the Church by the direction of their blessed Master, and the unerring guidance of the Holy Spirit, was in all essential points what we now term Episcopal; and, *secondly*, that such are the circumstances connected with this original institution, and such the important and permanent purposes which it was designed to answer, that Episcopacy must be regarded as an immutable characteristic of the true Church of Christ.

Before I proceed to establish these positions by direct proof, one or two previous considerations naturally present themselves, which may serve to prepare the mind for its more candid reception.—If there are privileges annexed to the Church which God only can bestow, God, and not man, must be the author and framer of that sacred society.—If the Church, as we have already seen grounds to infer, be a visible



society, nothing can well be expected to be more notoriously observable in it, than its external polity.—If it be, moreover, a society to which unity is indispensable, an uniformity in that polity, at least in its more prominent features, is naturally to be looked for.—Again, if schism be a sin of so deep a die as the Scriptures represent it to be, what can be greater than the antecedent improbability, that the humble and diligent inquirer should meet with any insurmountable difficulties in ascertaining how he is to avoid that sin, and what that is from which he must not separate?—If our blessed Lord commands us on certain occasions to “tell” our case “to the Church<sup>a</sup>,” surely the Church should readily be discovered;—if it be a society to which we are all bound to unite ourselves, as we hope to partake of the privileges of the Christian covenant, it must consistently possess such conspicuous and decisive marks as may distinguish it from every rival association; it must be as “a city set on an hill, “which cannot be hid<sup>b</sup>,” but to the blind-

<sup>a</sup> Matth. xviii. 7.

<sup>b</sup> Matth. v. 14.



ness of wilful inattention or unreasonable prejudice.

If these considerations directly lead us, as they surely ought, to the rational expectation, that he who candidly investigates the form of that society which Christ, by his holy Apostles, established for his Church, will not search in vain; let us, on the other hand, beware of looking to the holy Scriptures for that professed and clear and accurate explanation on these points, which they were not intended to give, and which, for obvious reasons, cannot, in fairness, be expected from them. It should be carefully recollectcd, that the historical parts of the New Testament, besides being but a short abstract of the transactions which they record, refer, in

“ He that desireth to espie light at a narrow hole,  
“ must lay his eye near, if he mean to discover at large.  
“ So must he be curious in considering the Scriptures,  
“ that meaneth to discern those things that are not de-  
“ clared there at large, but are collected by circum-  
“ stance or consequence: especially in matters which  
“ we view at this distance of time, which representeth  
“ to us things done then through a mist of succeeding  
“ custom.” *Thorndike on the Primitive Government of Churches*, ch. i. p. 1.



general, to the primary conversion of disciples, and to a period when the Church was too much in its infancy to admit of complete and permanent regulation;—that the Epistles were, for the most part, addressed to those<sup>d</sup> who principally required instruction in the very rudiments of Christianity, and who as yet, perhaps, had no standing ministry ordained among them;—that even where the case was otherwise, the Epistles, being merely occasional, rather presuppose than explain the government of the Church, which, whilst it still remained<sup>e</sup> in the hands of the Apostles themselves, could scarcely be either misconceived or disputed;—that in the ministrations to which St. Paul sometimes alludes, the ordinary offices of the Church are not<sup>f</sup> always to be readily distinguished from

<sup>d</sup> See Archbishop Potter's Discourse on Church Government, p. 91—95.

<sup>e</sup> Ibid. p. 95, 96.

<sup>f</sup> “ Many of the ministers who lived in the age of the Apostles were extraordinary persons, whose ministrations are not always easy to be distinguished from those of the ordinary offices of the Church, or from one another. We are told, that God hath set some in his Church, first Apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles; then gifts of healings,



those extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, with which so many were then favoured ;—and finally, that most of the Apostles long survived the writing of the books of the New Testament, and may naturally be supposed to have proceeded by degrees to their full and final arrangements, as the increasing numbers and stability of the Church enabled them.

I. “He,” says the learned and ingenious Rogers, “who will form a just idea of “the plan upon which the society of the “Christian Church was formed, must con-“sult the writings of the primitive Church: “an exact account of its polity, in all its “parts, is no where given us in the New

“*helps, governments, diversities of tongues.* (1 Cor. xii. 28.) In which place, it is certain that different orders of ministers are described, some of which did not only excel others in the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, but also had authority to govern them.....But then it is not easy to give a distinct and certain account, what were the particular offices of these persons, and which of them were extraordinary and temporary, and which designed for the constant and lasting use of the Church, since the Scriptures do not speak clearly, and learned men have differed in their judgments about them.” *Archbishop Potter’s Discourse on Church Government*, p. 89—91.



“ Testament. But then, quite through  
“ these holy writings, there occurs frequent  
“ mention of such outward ordinances ad-  
“ ministered, and such acts of external  
“ communion enjoined and practised, such  
“ offices and powers either committed to,  
“ or exercised by, some Christians, and  
“ such submissions paid or required from  
“ others, as manifestly suppose and relate  
“ to a regular government and economy of  
“ the Church. And I think the evidences  
“ of this kind, which we may collect from  
“ Scripture, are such, that, if we take the  
“ assistance of primitive history for the in-  
“ terpretation of them, (which is equally  
“ necessary for the understanding any other  
“ ancient book,) we shall want little of a  
“ complete account of the offices of the  
“ Church, and their powers, even in the  
“ Scriptures.”

g “Without this concurrent assistance, indeed,” he adds, “many passages which relate to this subject will  
“ be hard to be understood; and therefore these primi-  
“ tive writings are to be taken as a proper, and even a  
“ necessary supplement in this point.” *Rogers’s Review*  
*of his Discourse on the Visible and Invisible Church*, p.  
171, 172.



1. The first step taken by our blessed Lord in forming the society of his Church was the selection of the twelve Apostles from the body of his disciples, “that they “should be with him, and that he might “send them forth to preach<sup>h</sup>. ” Afterwards we read, that he “appointed other “seventy also, and sent them two and two “before his face<sup>i</sup>. ” That they were of an order inferior<sup>k</sup> to the twelve, may appear from their original commission being some-

<sup>h</sup> Luke vi. 12, 13.

<sup>i</sup> Luke x. 1.

<sup>k</sup> “Who sees not then,” says Bishop Hall, “a manifest imparity in our Saviour’s own choice in the first gathering of his Church, wherein his Apostles were above his other disciples, the twelve above the seventy; above them in privileges, and especially in the immediateness of their calling, above them in their Master’s respects, above them in gifts and in the power of their dispensation, above them in commission, above them in miraculous operations.....And how plain is it, that such honourable regard was given to the twelve, that when one room fell void by the treason of Judas, it must, by the direction of the Spirit of God, be made up by an election out of the seventy. Had it not been an higher preferment to be an Apostle, wherefore was that scrutiny and choice?” *Bishop Hall, Episcopacy by Divine Right*, book ii. ch. 2. p. 91, 92.

See this point proved at length by Archbishop Potter, Discourse on Church Government, p. 42—44.



what less general, as it was limited to the particular cities and places, “ whither he “ himself would come<sup>1</sup>;”—from their not being appointed to “ be with him,” as the others were;—and from their never being mentioned again after they had returned to him, and given an<sup>m</sup> account of the success of their mission. But the difference becomes more striking, from the honours and distinctions afterwards and gradually conferred on the twelve. They received a promise that they should “ sit on twelve “ thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Is-“ rael” ;—they alone partook with their blessed Master of the last Supper, and received his command to<sup>n</sup> commemorate his sacrifice ;—to them alone did he, after his resurrection, “ speak of the things pertain-“ ing to the kingdom of God” , and confide his final directions for its government and continuance ;—and, if we may credit<sup>o</sup> Eu-

<sup>1</sup> Luke x. 1.      <sup>m</sup> Luke x. 17.      <sup>n</sup> Matt. xix. 28.

<sup>o</sup> Luke xxii. 19.      <sup>p</sup> Acts i. 3.

<sup>q</sup> Μαθίαν δὲ τὸν ἄντλ. Ἰούδᾳ τοῦ πρεσβύτου τοῖς ἀποστόλοις ἐγκατελεγέντα, τὸν τε σὸν αὐτῷ τῇ ὥμερᾳ φίλων τιμηθέντα, τῆς αὐτῆς τῶν ἐβδομήκοντα κλήσεως ἡξιώσθαι κατέχει λόγος. Eusebii Hist. Eccles. lib. i. cap. 12.



scbius or 'Epiphanius in a matter which is in itself both natural and probable, it was from among the seventy that Matthias was chosen to supply the vacancy in their number, occasioned by the death of the apostate Judas.

Thus, faint as are the indications of a regular Church during our Saviour's continuance on the earth, we may nevertheless trace the outlines of that *triple* polity which has ever since distinguished it; Christ himself being the visible Bishop and Governor of his Church, and the Apostles and the seventy forming two distinct orders of ministers, under his supreme authority.

As no inconsiderable illustration of the same point, let it be observed, that the Apostles received their full powers, not at their first ordination, but at <sup>s</sup> *three* distinct periods. Their *first* commission empow-

<sup>r</sup> Epiphanius mentions the same fact, and gives the names of some others who were also of the *seventy-two*, (as he states the number to be,) *viz.* the seven deacons, and Mark, Luke, Justus, Barnabas, Apelles, Rufus, and Niger. *Epiph. adv. Hæres.* edit. Paris. lib. i. p. 50.

<sup>s</sup> See this stated by Potter, Disc. on Ch. Government, p. 55—58.



ered them to preach the Gospel and to baptize<sup>t</sup>, offices which have usually been considered in the Church as within the qualifications of the lowest order of ministers;—next, they received authority to bless the elements of bread and wine, in commemoration of his death and sacrifice, an office which has never been performed by any below the second order;—and *lastly*, when their blessed Master was about to leave the world, he transferred to them the powers which he himself had exercised, and they entered on their full episcopal authority, to govern and judge the Church as he had governed and judged it, and ordain its ministers as he had ordained them.

Words could not express this transfer more amply than those which were employed in conveying to them their final and plenary commission. “As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them and whose

<sup>t</sup> John iv. 1, 2.



" soever sins ye retain, they are retained ".<sup>u</sup> To complete this parallel, as Christ had not undertaken the execution of his office, until he had been duly authorized by the visible <sup>x</sup>descent of the Holy Ghost, so neither did the Apostles commence the active labours of their ministry, till they had received power for that purpose from the same Divine source on <sup>y</sup>the day of Pentecost.

The extent of their commission is best explained by their own interpretation of it, as displayed in their subsequent conduct. And it is observable, that scarcely an act of power was exerted by our Lord himself during his abode on earth, which was not afterwards, in a degree at least, exercised by his Apostles<sup>z</sup>. Besides performing the

<sup>u</sup> John xx. 21—23.    <sup>x</sup> Matt. iii. 16.    <sup>y</sup> Acts ii. 4.

<sup>z</sup> " The power is clear, will you see the execution of " it? Look upon St. Paul, the posthumous and super- " numerary, but no less glorious Apostle; see with what " majesty he becomes his new-erected throne; one while " deeply charging and commanding; another while con- " trolling and censuring; one while giving laws and " ordinances, another while urging for their observance; " one while ordaining Church governors, another while



ordinary offices of the Christian priesthood, preaching, and prayer, and the administration of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, they assumed to themselves such authority as proved that the government of the Church was altogether committed to their charge, judging and condemning offenders<sup>a</sup>, inflicting on them spiritual censures, excluding them from spiritual privileges, pardoning<sup>b</sup> and reinstating them on their repentance, prescribing rules and<sup>c</sup> observances for the Church, ordaining its<sup>d</sup> ministers, superintending their official conduct and the soundness of their doctrine, and laying their hands on those who had been baptized, to<sup>e</sup> confirm them in the possession of the privileges of the Christian covenant.

These powers, which so decisively point

"adjuring them to do their duties; one while threatening punishment, another while inflicting it. And if these be not acts of jurisdiction, what can be such?"

Bp. Hall, *Episcopacy by Divine Right*, book ii. ch. 2.

p. 96. See also Potter, p. 58—68.

<sup>a</sup> 1 Cor. v. 5; and 1 Tim. i. 20.

<sup>b</sup> 2 Cor. ii. 6, 10.

<sup>c</sup> 1 Cor. ch. vii. viii. xi. xiv.

<sup>d</sup> Acts xiv. 23.

<sup>e</sup> Acts viii. 17.



them out as the episcopal rulers of the Church, may be considered as possessed by them independently of that more enlarged and general commission, which belonged to them as Apostles, strictly so called, and of those miraculous gifts and extraordinary effusions of the Spirit, which were withdrawn when the necessities of the infant Church no longer demanded their aid; which were possessed by the Apostles, in common with numerous Christians of inferior dignity; were considered as altogether distinct from official authority, and afforded no pretence for the unauthorized exercise of the ministerial functions<sup>f</sup>, or the violation of established order.

That the Apostles could have erred in the measures which they adopted in the execution of their office, or have arrogated to themselves any powers which their commission did not strictly warrant, must be considered as manifestly impossible. We are informed by the Evangelist St. Luke, that our blessed Lord “ shewed himself

<sup>f</sup> The consideration of this point is reserved for Sermon V.



“alive<sup>z</sup>” to his Apostles “after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of “the things pertaining to the kingdom of “God.” If then these unrecorded discourses must unquestionably have embraced matters so essential, as the means to be pursued in the formation of the society of his Church; if we know besides, that they acted under the influence of the Holy Spirit, who was to be sent “to guide “them into all truth<sup>h</sup>;” which we cannot interpret to mean less than all necessary truth, every truth connected with the due discharge of their Divine commission; can we hesitate to conclude, that the form of polity which the Church assumed under their superintending care, was of Divine appointment?

For a professed and regular detail of this polity we must not look to the holy Scriptures. It is sufficient that, from the incidental information which they supply, illustrated by the opinions and practice of the primitive ages, we are enabled to arrive

<sup>z</sup> Acts i. 3.

<sup>h</sup> John xvi. 13.



at conclusions completely satisfactory. Accordingly the Church is soon found to discover indisputable traces, at least, of that *threefold* ministry, which decides its episcopal character.

Of the apostolical appointment and solemn<sup>i</sup> ordination of *deacons* we have a distinct account. And though the original institution of *elders*, or *presbyters*, is not recorded, we find a council of them at Jerusalem<sup>k</sup>, assisting in the management of the Church, and manifestly subordinate, first to the Apostles, during their continuance at Jerusalem, and afterwards to their own immediate<sup>l</sup> Bishop, St. James. Paul and Barnabas in their progress through the various cities of Asia Minor, “ordained “them elders in every church<sup>m</sup>.”—St. James, writing “to the twelve tribes which “are scattered abroad,” directs, that “if “any is sick among them, he should call “for the elders of the Church, that they “might pray over him, and anoint him

<sup>i</sup> Acts vi. 2—6.

<sup>l</sup> Acts xxi. 18.

<sup>k</sup> Acts xi. 30, and xv. 6.

<sup>m</sup> Acts xiv. 23.



"with oil in the name of the Lord". St. Peter, who writes "to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia," exhorts the Elders to "feed the flock of God which is among them, taking the oversight thereof."<sup>n</sup> The Epistle to the Philippians is addressed, "to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the Bishops and Deacons."<sup>p</sup> St. Paul tells the Corinthians, that "God hath set some in the Church, first Apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles," and other gifts. St. Paul in his travels is sometimes attended by a minister of the second order, and one or more *deacons*, as by Silas<sup>r</sup>, who is called a *prophet*, and Timothy an *evangelist* or *deacon*: and sometimes by *deacons* only, as by Timothy and Erastus<sup>s</sup>.

Thus whatever may have been the case in particular instances, where the Gospel was not sufficiently established to admit of

<sup>n</sup> James i. 1, and v. 14.

<sup>o</sup> 1 Pet. i. 1, and v. 1, 2.

<sup>p</sup> Phil. i. 1.

<sup>q</sup> 1 Cor. xii. 28.

<sup>r</sup> Acts xv. 32, 40.

<sup>s</sup> Acts xix. 22.



a standing ministry, there is the most indisputable evidence from the books of the New Testament<sup>t</sup>, that even at the early period to which those writings refer, there were, besides the Apostles, at least two orders of ministers, both inferior to the Apostles, and receiving their ordination from them; viz. *presbyters* or *elders*, occasionally called *bishops*, and sometimes, from their peculiar gifts, *prophets*; and *deacons*, styled sometimes *evangelists* or *teachers*. I say *at least two* orders, because learned men have differed in their opinions, whether the persons called both *bishops* and *presbyters* in St. Paul's Epistles are all to be considered as *mere presbyters*, or whether some of them were not really of that superior order, afterwards known as *bishops*, when those titles were more distinctly appropriated<sup>u</sup>. But I am not anxious to

<sup>t</sup> See this argument more fully detailed by Potter, p. 96—105.

<sup>u</sup> “I will not take upon me to decide this controversy,” says Potter, “which has exercised the pens of many wise and learned men; but only suggest a few things, which I shall leave to the judgment of the im-



express even an opinion on this point, as it is altogether unnecessary to my argument. All that I would contend for as already proved, is, that there were very generally two distinct orders of ministers in the early Church, in the appointment and under the control of the Apostles.

But the Apostles, it has been urged, must not be considered as a precedent for episcopal authority, inasmuch as their office was peculiar to themselves, and in their apostleship they could have no successors. That no future ministers could succeed to them as Apostles, strictly so called, will be readily admitted; but that they might

"partial reader." These suggestions (which see) tend to shew, that it is very probable that in the writings of the New Testament the terms *bishop* and *presbyter* sometimes implied two distinct orders of ministers. But he concludes, that "though we should allow that the names of *bishop* and *presbyter* did in that age signify the same office, as some of the Fathers in the fourth century seem to have thought; and farther, that all the *bishops* spoken of in the forementioned texts of Scripture were mere *presbyters*, and of the next order above deacons, which is the utmost concession that can be desired;".....(including the *Apostles*) "there were three distinct orders of ministers, by whom the Christian Church was governed." Pötter, p. 106—111.



have successors in that spiritual commission which empowered them to govern and perpetuate the Church, is not inconsistent with reason, and that they had such is capable of the most satisfactory demonstration. “In some things,” says the judicious Hooker, “every Presbyter, in some things “only Bishops, in some things neither the “one nor the other are the Apostles’ suc-“cessors. The Apostles were sent as spe-“cial chosen eye-witnesses of Jesus Christ, “from whom immediately they received “their whole embassage, and their com-“mission to be the principal first founders “of an house of God, consisting as well of “Gentiles as of Jews. In this there are not “after them any other like unto them; and “yet the Apostles have now their succes-“sors upon earth, their true successors, “if not in the largeness, surely in the kind “of that episcopal function, whereby they “had power to sit as spiritual ordinary “judges, both over laity and over clergy, “where Christian Churches were estab-“lished.”

\* Hooker’s Ecclesiastical Polity, book vii. 8vo. edit.  
vol. iii. p. 123.



Indeed that general and extensive commission, which the Apostles received, to “preach the Gospel to every creature,” and which at first sight may seem to distinguish them so immeasurably from ordi-

“ I doe not denie,” says Bilson, “ but many things in  
“ the Apostles were personall, given them by God’s wis-  
“ dome, for the first spreading of the faith, and planting  
“ of the Churches amongst Jewes and Gentiles, that all  
“ nations might be converted unto Christ by the sight  
“ of their miracles, and directed by the truth of their  
“ doctrine; yet that all their gifts ended with their  
“ lives, and no part of their charge and power remained  
“ to their after-commers; may neither be confessed by  
“ us nor affirmed by any, unless we mean wholly to sub-  
“ vert the Church of Christ.....The Scriptures once  
“ written suffice all ages for instruction: the miracles  
“ then done are for ever a most evident confirmation of  
“ their doctrine; the authoritie of their first calling  
“ liveth yet in their succession; and time and travail,  
“ joyned with God’s graces, bring pastours at this pre-  
“ sent to perfection; yet the Apostles charge to teach,  
“ baptize, and administer the Lord’s Supper, to bind  
“ and loose sinnes in heaven and in earth, to impose  
“ hands for the ordaining of pastours and elders;—these  
“ parts of the apostolieke function and charge are not  
“ decayed and cannot be wanting in the Church of God.  
“ There must either be no Church, or else these must  
“ remaine; for without these no Church can continue.”  
*Bilson on the Perpetual Government of Christ’s Church,*  
chap. ix. p. 105.

y Mark xvi. 15.



dinary Bishops, appears to have been gradually restrained by themselves, as the circumstances of the Church admitted or required it, to some resemblance to a local Episcopacy. Ecclesiastical historians not only testify that they divided the world amongst them for the separate exercise of their ministry, but give the names of the particular<sup>z</sup> countries assigned to each. And although the information afforded in the New Testament of the proceedings of the Apostles in converting the nations, with the exception of St. Paul, is extremely scanty, we may discover evident traces of this fact in his Epistles;—as for instance, from the unwillingness which he expresses to “stretch himself beyond his measure,”

<sup>z</sup> Ἡνίκα οἱ ἀπόστολοι κλήρῳ τὴν εἰς τὰ ἔθνη πορείαν ἐποιοῦντο, Θωμᾶς μὲν τὴν Ιάραν ἀποστολὴν ὑπερέχετο· Ματθαῖος δὲ τὴν Λιθιοπίαν. Βαρθολομαῖος δὲ ἐκληροῦστο τὴν συνημμένην ταύτην Ἰνδίαν. Socrates, Eccles. Hist. lib. i. cap. xv.

Θωμᾶς μὲν, ὡς η παράδοσις πέρισσει, τὴν Παφίαν εἰληχειν· Ἀνδρέας δὲ τὴν Σκυθίαν· Ἰωάννης τὴν Ἀσίαν πρὸς οὓς καὶ διατρίψας ἐν Ἐρέσω τελευτᾷ. Πέτρος δὲ ἐν Πόντῳ καὶ Γαλατίᾳ, καὶ Βιθυνίᾳ, Καππαδοκίᾳ τὲ καὶ Ἀσίᾳ κεκηρευχέναι τοῖς ἐκ διασπορᾶς Ἰουδαϊστέσιν· ὃς καὶ ἐπὶ τέλει ἐν Ῥώμῃ γενόμενος ἀνεσκολοπίσθη κατὰ κεφαλῆς, οὕτως αὐτὸς ἀξιώσας παθεῖν. Euseb. Eccles. Hist. lib. iii. cap. I.



and “boast in another man’s line<sup>a</sup>;” and by comparing the decisive authority with which he addresses those whom he had himself converted, and whom he considered under his own peculiar jurisdiction,<sup>b</sup> with the mere exhortations to which he confines himself, when writing to those over whom he had no such claims. It should appear also, from the early histories, that the Apostles,

<sup>a</sup> 2 Cor. x. 14—16.

<sup>b</sup> “Every Apostle exercised a particular authority over the Churches which he had planted. This is the reason of the difference between such of St. Paul’s Epistles as were written to Churches converted by himself, and those to others. To the former he writes in a style of command and authority; but in these last he only exhorts, and persuades, and intreats. Thus in his Epistles to the Corinthians he asserts his own particular authority over them, exclusive of all others, which he grounds on his having converted them..... He presently adds that, if they proved refractory, he would come with a rod to chastise them. (1 Cor. iv. 14—21.) Again, *If I am not an Apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you.*” (Ibid. ix. 2.)..... And when he writes to the Romans, the Colossians, and the Hebrews, who had been converted by others, there is no mention made of commanding, but he instructs and exhorts them, as one who had obtained grace to be an Apostle to all nations, but had no particular authority over them.” *Potter on Church Government*, p. 86—88.



towards the close of their lives, and when the Church had received its more settled form, fixed their residence in particular places, as St. John at Ephesus, St. Peter first at <sup>c</sup>Antioch, and afterwards at Rome, and St. James at Jerusalem.

St. James, indeed, is not only described as the first Bishop of Jerusalem by the unvarying testimony of the <sup>d</sup>primitive writers, but, what is more to our immediate purpose, this fact receives the most satisfactory illustration from the sacred volume. From the manner in which his name is incidentally mentioned in the Acts and Epistles, we may collect, not only that he remained at Jerusalem after the dispersion of the other Apostles, but that he exercised supreme authority there. When St. Paul went up to Jerusalem, three years after his con-

<sup>c</sup> Origen. Hom. vi. in Lucam.

<sup>d</sup> Euseb. Eccl. Hist. lib. ii. c. 1. Epiph. adv. Hæreses, lib. ix. edit. Paris. p. 119. The episcopal chair or throne, originally used by St. James, had been handed down to his successors in the see of Jerusalem, and was still preserved and held in high veneration when Eusebius wrote his history;—in the early part of the fourth century after Christ. *Euseb. Eccl. Hist.* lib. vii. c. 19.



version, to see Peter, “ Other of the Apostles,” says he, “ saw I none, save James the Lord’s brother<sup>e</sup>. ” When St. Peter was delivered from prison by the angel, his directions to his disciples are these; “ Go, shew these things unto James, and to the brethren<sup>f</sup>. ” In the general Synod which was held some years afterwards at Jerusalem, respecting the circumcision of the Gentiles, after the opinions of St. Peter and others had been given, St. James delivers himself with manifest authority, and his sentence is decisive<sup>g</sup>. This is the more remarkable, as in the earlier parts of the history, St. Peter apparently takes the lead among the Apostles.—About the same period, some from the Church of Jerusalem who came to Antioch, are described as “ certain who came from James<sup>h</sup>. ”—And finally, on St. Paul’s last visit to Jerusalem, St. James is still there; for we read, “ the

<sup>e</sup> Gal. i. 18. A.D. 38.      <sup>f</sup> Acts xii. 17. A.D. 44.

<sup>g</sup> Acts xv. 13—19. A.D. 52. St. Chrysostom assigns as the reason for this preeminence, that he was the Bishop of Jerusalem. Hom. xxxiii. in Act. xv. 23.

<sup>h</sup> Gal. ii. 12.



"day following Paul went in with us unto James, and all the elders were there!"

From these texts, referring to various periods during the space of about twenty-two years, it is sufficiently evident that the Church of Jerusalem was under the immediate superintendence of St. James.

If, then, an actual Apostle of our blessed Lord evidently exercised his apostolical functions in a regular and resident Episcopacy;—if the circumstance of Jerusalem being the only Church where the Scriptures so clearly evince this regularity of system, is amply accounted for by Jerusalem being the original seat of the Christian religion, and for many years, probably, the only place where the numbers or the attainments of the disciples admitted of its complete adoption, what can be considered more strongly illustrative of the intention of the Apostles to pursue the same course in other churches, either by themselves, or their deputies, or their successors?

That the Apostles were invested with authority to impart to others, if not all their

<sup>i</sup> Acts xxi. 18. A.D. 60.



exalted privileges, yet at least those spiritual powers which enabled them to govern the Church on the plan here supposed,—and, moreover, that they actually did impart them, the writings of the New Testament will even of themselves afford us ample proof.

If their final commission from their blessed Master was conceived in terms so comprehensive as these, “As my Father hath sent me, so send I you,” amongst the various powers here of necessity implied, can any be less disputable than this, “As my Father hath sent me with power to ordain those who shall bear rule in my Church, so send I you with the same power?” If he finally closes this commission with this glorious encouragement to their zealous and persevering exertions in fulfilling it, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world<sup>k</sup>,” shall we limit this gracious promise to those whose mortal career a few short years must terminate? Must it not be absolutely unintelligible, but in its more extended ap-

<sup>k</sup> Matth. xxviii. 20.



plication to those also, who should duly succeed them in their sacred functions to the end of time?

And with respect to the evidences of the appointment of others possessed of powers similar to those which were exercised by the Apostles, admitting, of course, St. Paul to be strictly an Apostle, although not one of the original twelve, instances may be pointed out in Scripture, of persons either styled Apostles, or possessed of corresponding authority; and some even recorded as invested with this authority by Apostles;—as for example, Barnabas, who for some time accompanied St. Paul in the same apostolic missions, on a footing of perfect equality<sup>1</sup>;—Epaphroditus, who is styled an Apostle<sup>m</sup>;—the seven angels of the Asiatic churches mentioned in the Revelation of St. John<sup>n</sup>, who appear to have been the supreme rulers of those Churches<sup>o</sup>;—and Timothy and Titus, who evidently exercised episcopal authority in the churches of

<sup>1</sup> Acts xi—xv.      <sup>m</sup> Phil. ii. 25.      <sup>n</sup> Rev. i. 20.

<sup>o</sup> See this point satisfactorily established by Archbi-  
shop Potter, Disc. on Ch. Gov. p. 132—141.



Ephesus and Crete by the appointment of St. Paul<sup>r</sup>. The particulars of this authority are so expressly enumerated in St. Paul's Epistles to them, as to leave no room, one would imagine, for question or cavil;—they are authorized to ordain elders<sup>t</sup>;—to regulate what pertained to the due order of their churches<sup>u</sup>;—to take cognizance of the doctrine<sup>s</sup> of their subordinate ministers; to “rebuke with all authority<sup>t</sup>,” and sit in judgment on offenders<sup>u</sup>. If Timothy is empowered to “receive accusations” even “against elders<sup>x</sup>,” can we suppose him of the same rank with those who are thus subjected to his spiritual censures? If Titus is authorized in his individual capacity to “reject heretics<sup>y</sup>” from the society of his Church, can his authority in this Church be considered less than episcopal and supreme?

In vain then must it be to argue, as some have been found to do, from the indiscri-

<sup>r</sup> 2 Tim. i. 6. and Tit. i. 5.

<sup>q</sup> 1 Tim. v. 22. and Tit. i. 5.

<sup>r</sup> 1 Tim. ii. and iii. and Tit. i. 5.

<sup>s</sup> 1 Tim. i. 3. and Tit. iii. 10.      <sup>t</sup> Tit. ii. 15.

<sup>u</sup> 1 Tim. v. 19—21.    <sup>x</sup> 1 Tim. v. 19.    <sup>y</sup> Tit. iii. 10.



minate use of the terms which we translate *bishop* and *elder*, that, with the exception of the Apostles, the early Church contained no minister superior to mere elders. As well might we contend, (to borrow the illustration of an ingenious writer<sup>a</sup>,) that

"When we find it given in charge to Timothy, the first Bishop of Ephesus, how he was to proceed against his Presbyters when they transgressed, to sit in judgment upon them, examine witnesses against them, and pass censures upon them, it is a most impertinent logomachy to argue from the etymology of the words, that notwithstanding all this, a Bishop and a Presbyter are the same thing. Therefore that one text (1 Tim. v. 19.) is sufficient to silence this pitiful clamour of the Presbyterians. Our English reads it, *against an elder*, which is the literal translation of the word *presbyter*, *κατὰ πρεσβύτερον*: *against a presbyter receive not an accusation but before two or three witnesses; and them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.* Now upon the Presbyterian hypothesis we must say, that Timothy had no authority or jurisdiction over that Presbyter, against whom he had power to receive accusations, examine witnesses, and pass censures upon him; and that such a Presbyter had the same authority over Timothy; which is so extravagant, and against common sense, that I will not stay longer to confute it." *Leslie on the Qualifications necessary to administer the Sacraments; Works*, vol. ii. p. 722, 723.

<sup>a</sup> "Bishop signifies an Overseer, and Presbyter an Ancient Man or Elder Man; whence our term Alderman."



there never was an Emperor of Rome, from the circumstance of his title *Imperator* having very generally designated the mere

“ And this is as good a foundation to prove that the  
“ Apostles were Aldermen, in the city acceptation of  
“ the word, or that our Aldermen are all Bishops and  
“ Apostles, as to prove that Presbyters and Bishops  
“ are all one, from the childish gingle of the words. It  
“ would be the same thing, if one should undertake to  
“ confront all antiquity, and prove against all the his-  
“ tories, that the Emperors of Rome were no more than  
“ Generals of Armies, and that every Roman General  
“ was Emperor of Rome, because he could find the word  
“ *Imperator* sometimes applied to the General of an  
“ Army. Or as if a Commonwealth-man should get up  
“ and say, that our former Kings were no more than  
“ our Dukes are now, because the style of *Grace*, which  
“ is now given to Dukes, was then given to Kings. And  
“ suppose that any one were put under the penance of  
“ answering to such ridiculous arguments, what method  
“ would he take but to shew, that the Emperors of  
“ Rome, and former Kings of England, had Generals of  
“ Armies and Dukes under them, and exercised au-  
“ thority over them?” *Ibid.* p. 722. “ The name Bi-  
“ shop hath been borrowed from the Grecians, with  
“ whom it signifieth one which hath principal charge to  
“ guide and oversee others. The same word in eccl-  
“ esiastical writings being applied unto Church govern-  
“ ors, at the first unto all and not unto the chiefest only,  
“ grew in short time peculiar and proper to signify such  
“ episcopal authority alone, as the chiefest governors  
“ exercised over the rest; for with all names this is



commander of an army. It is the office, not the name, for which we have to contend; and let it be but granted, that Titus and Timothy possessed that authority over elders which has just now been stated, and their titles are not worth the investigation. There are not wanting instances where our Lord himself, besides many other appellations, is called both Bishop<sup>b</sup> and Deacon<sup>c</sup>; yet does this lower our ideas of the dignity of his person and office? And when the Apostles occasionally styled themselves elders<sup>d</sup>, and sometimes deacons<sup>e</sup>, did those whom they addressed lose sight of their apostolic supremacy? The fact ap-

“ usual, that inasmuch as they are not given till the  
 “ things wherunto they are given have been some time  
 “ first observed, therefore generally, things are ancienter  
 “ than the names whereby they are called. .... Where-  
 “ fore a lame and impotent kind of reasoning it is, when  
 “ men go about to prove that in the Apostles’ times  
 “ there was no such thing as the restrained name of a  
 “ Bishop doth now signify; because in their writings  
 “ there is found no restraint of that name, but only a  
 “ general use whereby it reacheth unto all spiritual go-  
 “ vernors and overseers.” *Hooker’s Eccles. Polity*, book  
 vii. 8vo. edit. vol. iii. p. 115, 116.

<sup>b</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 25.

<sup>c</sup> Rom. xv. 8.

<sup>d</sup> 1 Pet. v. 1.

<sup>e</sup> 2 Cor. iii. 6.



pears to be, and it is supported by the opinion of Theodoret, that, although <sup>f</sup> some others besides the twelve were originally called Apostles, their successors modestly declined so high a title, and thenceforth universally assumed and appropriated to themselves the appellation of Bishops only.

That the Scriptures supply us with very imperfect information with respect to the regulations adopted by the Apostles in the generality of the Churches which they had planted, will readily be allowed; but this, as we have before seen, was obviously to be expected. “The Apostles,” says Epiphanius, “could not establish every thing at once; “nothing was complete at its beginning, “but in process of time things were brought “to the requisite perfection.”” The ques-

<sup>f</sup> Τοὺς αὐτοὺς ἐκάλουν ποτὲ πρεσβυτέρους καὶ ἐπισκόπους· τοὺς δὲ νῦν χαλουμένους ἐπισκόπους, ἀποστόλους ὄνομαζον· τοῦ δὲ χρόνου προϊόντος τὸ μὲν τῆς ἀποστολῆς ὄνομα τοῖς ἀλγθαῖς ἀποστόλοις κατέλιπον· τὴν δὲ τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς προσηγορίαν τοῖς πάλαι χαλουμένοις ἀποστόλοις ἐπέβεσαν. Theodoret. in Epist. i. ad Tim. cap. 3.

<sup>g</sup> Οὐ γὰρ πάντα εὗθὺς ἡδυνήθησαν οἱ ἀποστόλοι καταστῆσαι.... καὶ γὰρ ἔκαστον πρᾶγμα οὐκ ἀπαρχῆσται πάντα ἔσχεν, ἀλλὰ προβαίνοντος τοῦ χρόνου τὰ πρὸς τελείωσιν τῶν χρειῶν κατηγτίζετο. Epiphan. adv. Hæres. lxxv. edit. Colon. tom. i. p. 908.



tion therefore to be decided, is, not what the Apostles did at the commencement of their ministry, but how they proceeded when their converts had become numerous, and capable of a regular government. To derive one's ideas of the form of polity to be adopted in the Church of Christ, when permanently established, from the apparent anomalies which may have marked its infant state, must necessarily lead to the most erroneous conclusions.

Besides, if we may conclude that the Apostles in general pursued a course resembling that of St. Paul, who describes himself as retaining "the care of all the 'Churches,'" and appears to have continued for many years the exercise of his apostolical authority, even over the most remote, it is only towards the close of their lives and ministry that we are to look for the appointment of their successors, and their final regulations of government. The reason assigned by St. Paul for delegating his authority to Timothy forcibly illustrates this conclusion. "For I am now," says he, "ready to be offered, and the time of my



“ departure is at hand<sup>k</sup>.” “ As the Apostles,” says the learned Thorndike, “ began to wear out, or otherwise as their occasions gave them not leave to attend in person upon the Churches of their care, reason required, if but in correspondence to the state of government that had hitherto rested on some Apostle and the presbyteries of particular Churches, there should be instituted some heads of these companies of presbyters, to whom the name of Bishops hath been appropriated ever since; and certain it is, that during the time of the Apostles instituted they were!”

2. For the confirmation of this fact, which we have found to be partially exhibited in the sacred volume, we naturally have recourse to the early writers of the Christian Church. Every law is best explained by subsequent practice, and every doubt respecting the intention or the language of the Apostles, is most satisfactorily

<sup>k</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 6.

<sup>l</sup> Thorndike on the Primitive Government of Churches, chap. iv. p. 28, 29.



removed by the recorded verdict of their successors. And here we find ourselves “ compassed with such a cloud of witness-“ es,” that our difficulty is no longer to discover testimony to the Episcopal cause, but to select it with appropriate brevity from the mass of evidence which presents itself to notice.

As on every account the most important witnesses, the first in order of time, as the highest in undoubted authority, we naturally regard <sup>m</sup> Clement and <sup>n</sup> Ignatius, the one the “ fellow-labourer ” of St. Paul, the other a disciple of St. John. “ Our Apo-“ stles,” says Clement, “ knew by our Lord “ Jesus Christ, that there would be con-“ tentions about the name of Episcopacy; “ on this account therefore, having perfect “ foreknowledge, they appointed those

<sup>m</sup> Bishop of Rome after (though not next after) St. Peter: Tertullian says, that he was so appointed by St. Peter himself. *Tertull. de Præscript. Hæretic.* cap. 32.

<sup>n</sup> Successor to Evodius in the see of Antioch, and ordained to that dignity, according to Chrysostom, by the hands of St. Peter. (διὰ τῆς τοῦ μεγάλου Πέτρου δεξιᾶς.) *Homil. in S. Ignat.* He suffered martyrdom in the reign of Trajan. *Euseb. Eccles. Hist.* lib. iii. cap. 22, 36.

<sup>o</sup> Phil. iv. 3.



“ whom I have mentioned, and moreover  
 “ established a rule, that, when they died,  
 “ other approved men should succeed them  
 “ in their ministry! ” The language of  
 Ignatius is, if possible, still more decisive.  
 “ In like manner let all reverence the  
 “ Deacons, as the command of Jesus  
 “ Christ; as also the Bishop as the Son  
 “ of the Father; and the Elders as the  
 “ council of God, and assembly of Apo-  
 “ stles. Without these it is not called a  
 “ Church.”—“ He that doth any thing  
 “ without the Bishop and Presbytery and  
 “ Deacons, the same is not pure in his  
 “ conscience.” “ Give heed to your  
 “ Bishop, that God may give heed to

Ῥ Οἱ Ἀπόστολοι ἡμῶν ἔγνωσαν διὰ τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ  
 Χριστοῦ ὅτι ἔρεις ἔσται ἐπὶ τοῦ ὄντος ματος τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς διὰ  
 ταύτην οὖν τὴν αἵτιαν, πρόγνωσιν εἰληφότες τελείαν, κατέστησαν  
 τοὺς προειρημένους, καὶ μεταξὺ ἐπινομὴν δεδώκασιν, ὥπως ἐὰν κοι-  
 μήθωσιν, διαδέξωνται ἔτεροι δεσμοιμισμένοι ἄνορες τὴν λειτουργίαν  
 αὐτῶν. Clem. Epist. ad Corinth. cap. 44.

ἢ Ὁμοίως πάντες ἐντρεπεσθῶσαν τοὺς διακόνους ὡς Ἰησοῦν  
 Χριστόν· ὡς καὶ τὸν ἐπίσκοπον, ὅντα οὐν τοῦ πατρός. τοὺς δὲ  
 πρεσβυτέρους ὡς συνέόριν Θεοῦ, καὶ ὡς σύνταγμον ἀποστόλων.  
 Χωρὶς ταύτων ἐκκλησία οὐ καλεῖται. Ignatii Epist. ad Trall.  
 edit. Voss. p. 48.

· Ο χωρὶς ἐπισκόπου καὶ πρεσβυτερίου καὶ διακόνου πράσσων  
 τι, οὔτος οὐ καθαρός; ἔστιν τῇ συνειδήσει. Ibid: p. 50.



“ you. My life be a ransom for those who  
 “ are subject to the Bishop, Priests, and  
 “ Deacons, and may my portion be with  
 “ them in God.” And again, “ Let no  
 “ one, without the Bishop, do any of those  
 “ things which relate to the Church. Let  
 “ that Eucharist be accounted valid, which  
 “ is under the regulation of the Bishop, or  
 “ of one whom he may appoint. Where-  
 “ ever the Bishop appears, there let the  
 “ people be; even as where Christ is, there  
 “ is the Catholic Church !”

*Τῷ ἐπισκόπῳ προσέχετε, ἵνα καὶ ὁ Θεὸς ὑμῖν ἀντίψυχον  
 ἡγὼ τῶν ὑποτασσομένων τῷ ἐπισκόπῳ, πρεσβυτέροις, διακόνοις,  
 καὶ μετ’ αὐτῶν μοι τὸ μέρος γένοιτο σχεῖν ἐν Θεῷ. Epist. ad  
 Polycarp. p. 14.*

*Μηδὲὶς χωρὶς τοῦ ἐπισκόπου τὶ πρασσέτο τῶν ἀνηκόντων εἰς  
 τὴν ἐκκλησίαν. Ἐκείνη βεβαία εὐχαριστία ἡγείσθω, ή ὅπο τὸν  
 ἐπίσκοπον ούσα, ἡ φῶν αὐτὸς ἐπιτρέψῃ. “Οπου ἀν φανῇ ὁ ἐπίσκο-  
 πος, ἔκει τὸ πλῆθος ἔστω ἀσπερ ὅπου ἡ Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς, ἔκει  
 ἡ καθολικὴ ἐκκλησία. Ad Smyrn. p. 6.*

The foregoing extracts, which might be multiplied to almost any extent, are taken from those Epistles of Ignatius which have been proved to be genuine by Vossius and Pearson. See Pearson's *Vindiciae Ignatianæ*.

“ His writings” (I quote the remarks of Mr. Sikes) “ are of all others the most direct and explicit in establishing Episcopacy, and in asserting the authority of Bishops. There is scarcely an Epistle, nay, scarcely a page of his Epistles, which contains not some instruc-



Now if we were inclined to dispute the testimony of these glorious saints and martyrs, could we urge, that, though they actually lived with the Apostles, and received ordination from their hands, they were probably ignorant of the principles on which they governed the Church, or that knowing them they would wilfully deviate from them?—And for the sake of what?—Was the episcopal office in those early days an object of worldly ambition, coupled as it was with the certainty of augmented persecution, and the probability of tortures and death?

As we advance however to the succeeding generations, we meet with an unbroken series of testimony of the same description.

“*tion or injunction upon these points. It is for this reason, no doubt, that the writings of this apostolic man have met with so little respect from Anti-episcopalians; who are well aware, that it is impossible to evade his very decisive evidence for Episcopacy, unless they can prove it altogether spurious. This has many times been attempted, and as often failed; which gives to those writings so substantial an authenticity, as to place them, as they naturally stand, next in rank to the inspired writings of the Apostles.”*

*Discourse on Parochial Communion, p. 45, 46.*



In the following age we find Irenæus expressing himself thus decidedly on the point in question: "We can enumerate those who "by the Apostles were appointed bishops "in the Churches, and their successors "even to our own times, who neither "taught nor knew any such follies as these "men. And if the Apostles had known "hidden mysteries, which they secretly and "apart from the rest taught the perfect, "they would especially have delivered them "to those to whom they committed the "Churches themselves; for they wished "those to be very perfect and irrepre- "hensible in all things, whom they also "left as successors, delivering to them their "own place of government."<sup>a</sup>

" "Habemus annumerare eos, qui ab Apostolis insti-  
" tuti sunt Episcopi in Ecclesiis, et successores eorum  
" usque ad nos, qui nihil tale docuerunt, neque cognove-  
" runt, quale ab his deliratur. Etenim si recondita mys-  
" teria scissent Apostoli, quæ seorsim et latenter ab  
" reliquis perfectos docebant, his vel maxime traderent  
" ea, quibus etiam ipsas Ecclesias committebant. Valde  
" enim perfectos, et irreprehensibiles in omnibus eos  
" volebant esse, quos et successores relinquebant, suum  
" ipsorum locum magisterii tradentes." *Irenæus adv. Hæreses*, lib. ii. cap. 3.



Early in the next century we find Tertullian speaking of heretics in these terms ; “ Let them produce then the origins of their Churches; let them shew the order of their Bishops, so derived by successions from the beginning, as that their first bishop had one of the Apostles, or of the apostolical men who persevered with the Apostles, as his founder and predecessor.” Among numberless passages which might be cited from Cyprian, the following are sufficiently decisive : “ Christ said to the Apostles, and thereby to all the governors who succeed to the Apostles by vicarious ordination, He that heareth you heareth me<sup>x</sup>;” and again ;

\* “ Edant ergo origines Ecclesiarum suarum ; evolvant ordinem Episcoporum suorum, ita per successiones ab initio decurrentem, ut primus ille episcopus aliquem ex Apostoliis, vel Apostolicis viris, qui tamen cum Apostolis perseveraverit, habuerit auctorem et antecessorem.” *Tertullian. de Praescript. Hæretic.* cap. 32.

y “ Dicit (Christus) ad Apostolos, et per hoc ad omnes prepositos, qui Apostolis vicaria ordinatione succedunt ; Qui audit vos, me audit ; et qui me audit, audit eum, qui me misit. Et qui rejicit vos, me rejicit, et eum qui me misit.” *Cyprian. Epist. lxix. edit. Baluzii, p. 122.*



“ The government of Bishops and the  
“ order of the Church has come down  
“ through a series of successions, so that  
“ the Church is founded upon the Bishops,  
“ and every act of the Church is under  
“ their control, by the Divine law.”

At the close of this, and at the commencement of the succeeding century, Eusebius, the laborious investigator of the records of the Church, has given us, in his Ecclesiastical History, exact and authentic catalogues of the Bishops who presided in the principal cities of the Roman empire, in unbroken succession from the Apostles to his own time<sup>a</sup>.

<sup>z</sup> “ Per temporum et successionum vices Episcoporum  
“ ordinatio, et ecclesiae ratio occurrit, ut ecclesia super  
“ Episcopos constituatur, et omnis actus ecclesiae per  
“ eosdem præpositos gubernetur.” Cum hoc itaque di-  
vina lege fundatum sit, &c. *Ibid. Epist. xxvii.* p. 37, 38.

<sup>a</sup> “ It is as impossible,” says Archbishop Potter, “ for  
“ an impartial man, who shall compare this historian  
“ with the rest of the primitive Fathers, to doubt whe-  
“ ther there was a succession of Bishops from the Apo-  
“ stles, as it would be to call in question the succession  
“ of Roman emperors from Julius Cæsar, or the succe-  
“ sion of kings in any other country.” *Discourse on  
Church Government*, p. 169, 170.



This brings us to the age of Constantine; and as no one is found to contend against the fact of the universal prevalence of episcopal supremacy from henceforth to the period of the Reformation, here the citations from the Fathers might have been closed, but for the necessity of a remark or two on the testimony of Jerome, who is usually considered by the advocates of the Presbyterian discipline, as a writer unsavourable to the cause of Episcopacy. In fact, on a particular occasion, indignant at the supposed encroachment of Deacons on the dignity of the Presbyters, to which order he belonged, he is found to argue, from the promiscuous use in the New Testament of the names *Bishop* and *Presbyter*, for their original equality<sup>b</sup>. But if he here

<sup>b</sup> “Idem est Presbyter qui Episcopus; et antequam  
“Diaboli instinctu studia in religione fierent, et dicere-  
“tur in populis, Ego sum Pauli, ego Apollo, ego autem  
“Cephae, communi Presbyterorum concilio Ecclesiae  
“gubernabantur. Postquam vero unusquisque eos, quos  
“baptizaverat, suos putabat, non Christi, in toto orbe  
“decreatum est, ut unus e Presbyteris electus superpo-  
“neretur cæteris, ad quem omnis ecclesiæ cura perti-  
“neret, et schismatum semina tollerentur.” S. Hieron.  
*in Epist. ad Tit. cap. 1.*



intended to maintain all that his admirers would suppose, he is decidedly at variance, not only with the whole host of primitive writers, but, what is still more important, even with himself. If at other times he could write thus; “The power of riches and “the humility of poverty does not make a “Bishop higher or lower; but they are all “successors of the Apostles<sup>c</sup>:” “Without “the command of a Bishop, neither a “Presbyter nor a Deacon have power to “baptize<sup>d</sup>:” “With us the Bishops hold “the place of the Apostles<sup>e</sup>:”—if he is found to affirm, “that he who is baptized “in the Church, cannot receive the Holy “Ghost, but by the imposition of the Bi-“shop’s hands<sup>f</sup>;” what weight can be rea-

<sup>c</sup> Potentia divitiarum et paupertatis humilitas subliniorem, vel inferiorem Episcopum non facit; cæterum omnes Apostolorum successores sunt. *S. Hieron. Epist. ad Evagrium.*

<sup>d</sup> Inde venit, ut sine chrismate et episcopi jussione, neque Presbyter neque Diaconus jus habeant baptizandi. *Adv. Luciferian.*

<sup>e</sup> Apud nos Apostolorum locum Episcopi tenent. *Contra Montanum.*

<sup>f</sup> Quod si hoc loco quæris, quare in Ecclesia baptizatus, nisi per manus Episcopi, non accipiat Spiritum



sonably attached to expressions wrung from him under peculiar circumstances of jealousy and irritation?

Indeed, when most urgent to uphold the dignity of his office, he asks, “What does “a Bishop more than a presbyter, *ordinatio nation excepted*”<sup>s 2</sup> thus expressly allowing to the Bishop exclusively that very power which forms his most characteristic distinction. And again, when disposed to assign motives of human policy for the original appointment of Bishops, he evidently admits the very fact, which is of all the most important, that it originated during the lifetime of the Apostles; for he says, “When it was said, ‘I am “of Paul, I of Apollos,’ and every one “thought that those whom he had bap-“tized were his own, it was decreed in “the whole world, that one elected from “the presbyters should be placed over the “rest, that the seeds of schisms might be

Sanctum, quem nos asserimus in vero baptimate tribui;  
discere, &c. *Adv. Luciferian.*

<sup>s</sup> Quid enim facit, *excepta ordinatione*, Episcopus, quod Presbyter non facit? *Epist. ad Evagrium.*



"destroyed<sup>b</sup>." But is not every well-informed and reflecting Christian as competent a judge of the motives of the Apostles as even Jerome himself? or rather, shall we believe, that, divinely inspired and directed as they were, they could, in a case of such moment as the government of the Church of Christ, have experienced any motive, or adopted any policy, not absolutely suggested or sanctioned by the Spirit of God himself?

Again, supposing that it were possible to explain all the inconsistencies of Jerome, and perfectly to reconcile him to himself, which it would, in fact, be hopeless to attempt; and that his testimony to the unauthorized usurpation of episcopal rule were as decisive and clear, as it manifestly is not,—what weight could we possibly allow to his individual assertions, placed as they would be in contradiction to the united testimony of the whole primitive Church? who, in short, would pretend to balance a single writer with an host? and, what is of still more consequence with re-

<sup>b</sup> See note <sup>b</sup> in page 139.



ference to the facts in question, a presbyter of the fourth century with the fellow-labourers and disciples of Apostles, the saints and martyrs of the first<sup>i</sup>? But the truth is, that if Jerome's general testimony be considered, it is altogether impossible to regard him as an opponent of Episcopacy; some of the strongest testimonies in its favour being found in his works.

The single instance of Aerius is all that

<sup>i</sup> The learned Hainmond draws the following striking comparison between the testimonies of Jerome and Ignatius. “Nobis certe, qui inter Ignatium Apostolorum ‘οίνησαν, et recentioreni tot sæculis Hieronymum, inter Episcopum ἐφεμάρτυρα de ævo suo testantem, et presbyterum diaconorum fastum calcantem, et contra eos, quod ad manum fuerat jaculantem, comparationem instituimus, abunde erit, si Ignatius, ubique sibi constans, causæ ubique nostræ (ἀκαιρίως, εὐκαιρίως, ad versariis ipsis fatentibus) suffragatus sit; Hieronymus autem, si pugnet nobiscum quandoque, quandoque etiam suffragetur, nec uspiam a nostris partibus decisivisse putandus sit, quin pariter et a seipso abiisse concludatur; adeoque vel integrum nobis testimonium perhibuisse, vel inconstantia (quod nolim) sua, quicquid contra nos dixerit, irritum fecisse.” *Dissert. Secunda de Ignatio*, c. 29.

For an account of Jerome, and remarks on his testimony, see Archbishop Potter on Church Government, p. 78—82. and Daubeny's Guide to the Church, appendix, p. 51—59.



can be produced in the four first centuries, or, to speak more properly, even to the Reformation itself, of a person of note decidedly arguing for the equality of Bishops and Presbyters. But in what light was he regarded by his cotemporaries? not merely as an heretic, but as a madman. Epiphanius calls his notion “insane beyond the ‘capacity of human nature<sup>k</sup>.’” In short, this is one of those exceptions which but the more establish the general rule, and proves beyond contradiction the unvarying and decided opinion of the primitive ages, as to the divine origin of Episcopal rule, and the necessity of it to the very being of a Church. “Ecclesia est in Episcopo<sup>l</sup>,” was

<sup>k</sup> Aerius, a Presbyter of Sebastia in Pontus, in the fourth century, and a follower of the Arian heresy, having failed to obtain the bishopric of Sebastia, endeavoured to undermine the authority of his successful rival, first by calumnies, and afterwards, when this did not answer his purpose, by heading a schism against him, and maintaining that Bishops and Presbyters were of the same order, and equally qualified for every religious office. Epiphanius relates the story, and calls his doctrine *μανιώδης μᾶλλον ἢπερ παταστάσεως αὐθεωπίνης.* Epiphan. *adv. Hæres.* lxxv. edit. Colon. p. 906.

<sup>l</sup> *Scire debes, Episcopum in Ecclesia esse, et Ecclesi-*



the universal maxim ; the very heretics gloried in Bishops of their own persuasion ; not a schism could be effected without the sanction of a schismatical Prelate ; and we might, in those days, as reasonably look for Christianity without Sacraments as without Episcopacy<sup>m</sup>.

How then is all this mass of evidence, this consistency of recorded testimony encountered by the advocates of the Presbyterian system ? Compeilled by the clear light of undeniable facts, the most learned and able of their number have admitted

am in Episcopo, et si quis cum Episcopo non sit, in Ecclesia non esse. *Cyprian. Epist. lxxix. edit. Baluzii,* p. 123.

<sup>m</sup> The singular expedient to which Novatian had recourse, in order to enable him to rival the authority of Cornelius, Bishop of Rome, is strikingly illustrative of this truth. Having, under false pretences, persuaded three ignorant and simple Bishops from an obscure corner of Italy to come to Rome, he compelled them, when they were in a state of intoxication, to lay their hands on him and ordain him ;—a plain proof of the universally prevailing belief in those days, that none but a Bishop could govern the Church ; and moreover, that none but Bishops could ordain a Bishop. *Eusebius, Eccles. Hist. lib. vi, cap. 43.*



the universal <sup>n</sup> prevalence of Episcopacy within a few years after the times of the Apostles. Narrow then, indeed, are the limits thus allowed for the exercise of their hypothetical ingenuity, and large beyond example are the demands which they make on the credulity of the simple. We are required, in short, to believe, that, although the Apostles themselves governed the Church on the episcopal plan, and invested some others with similar authority, (for this is undeniably clear from Scripture,) they were, after all, the mere temporary guardians of Presbyterian equality;—that scarcely had they been all removed from the scene of their labours, before their gracious intentions in favour of the liberties of mankind were unhappily misunderstood, or, what is worse, that the whole world unanimously conspired to establish a government of their own devising, to the utter subversion of the institutions of inspired Apostles, and the

<sup>n</sup> See Chillingworth's Apostolical Institution of Episcopacy Demonstrated; Works, ninth edit. p. 299.



will of their Lord and Saviour;—that not one Presbyter was urged by the feelings of our common nature to remonstrate against a manifest usurpation;—that the meek and unassuming spirit of the Gospel of peace could not move one conscientious Bishop to disclaim his unauthorized dominion, or refuse his countenance to his arrogant brethren;—that neither the pen of the historian, nor voice of tradition, could be prevailed on to rescue from oblivion a change so fundamental, a revolution so extraordinary; but that, on the contrary, the pious Fathers of the primitive Church combined with unholy fraud to fabricate and record episcopal successions which had no existence, and impose on mankind, as apostolical and indispensable, the inventions of mere priestcraft and ambition”!

“The persecutions that then lay so heavy on the Church made it no desirable thing for a man to be exposed to their first fury, which was always the Bishop’s portion; and that in a course of many centuries in which there was nothing but poverty and labour to be got by the employment; there being no princes to set it on as an engine of government, and no synods of clergymen gathered to assume that authority to themselves, by joint designs and endeav-



“ When I shall see,” says the ingenious Chillingworth, “ all the democracies and “ aristocracies in the world lie down and “ sleep, and awake into monarchies, then “ will I begin to believe that presbyterian “ government, having continued in the “ Church during the Apostles’ times, should “ presently after (against the Apostles’ doc- “ trine and the will of Christ) be whirled “ about like a scene in a masque, and “ transformed into Episcopacy.” If all this is absolutely incredible, or rather, to human apprehension, impossible, but one conclusion can present itself. “ If the

“ yours. And can it be imagined, that in all that glo-  
“ rious cloud of witnesses to the truth of the Christian  
“ religion, who as they planted it with their labours, so  
“ watered it with their blood, there should not so much  
“ as one single person be found, on whom either a love  
“ of truth, or an envy at the advancement of others, pre-  
“ vailed so far, as to declare against such an early and  
“ universal corruption, (if it is to be esteemed one.)  
“ When all this is complicated together, it is really of  
“ so great authority, that I love not to give the proper  
“ name to that temper that can withstand so plain a  
“ demonstration.” *Bishop Burnet’s Preface to the Life  
of William Beddel, Bishop of Kilmore.*

“ Chillingworth’s Apostolical Institution of Episco-  
pacy Demonstrated; Works, 9th edit. p. 300.



“ Churches had erred,” as Tertullian justly argued, “ they would have varied; but “ what is the same among all, is not from “ error, but from tradition<sup>q</sup>. ” Apostolical appointment, therefore, is the only intelligible origin of the episcopal office. But if the Apostles acted under the guidance and inspiration of Heaven;—if, to say the least, they cannot be conceived to have adopted one measure, or enforced one practice of material concern to their Master’s kingdom, without either his previous instruction, or the subsequent direction of the Spirit of truth, then Episcopacy by apostolical appointment, and Episcopacy by divine institution, are one and the same<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>q</sup> “ Had episcopal government been an aberration  
“ from (or a corruption of) the government left in the  
“ Churches by the Apostles, it had been very strange  
“ that it should have been received in any *one* Church  
“ so suddenly, or that it should have prevailed in *all* for  
“ many ages after. *Variasse debuerat, error Ecclesiarum;*  
“ *quod autem apud omnes unum est, non est erratum sed*  
“ *traditum.* Thus Tertullian argues.” *Ibid.* p. 299.

<sup>r</sup> “ That government, whose ground being laid by our  
“ Saviour himself, was afterwards raised by the hands of



But “ what need we,” says the judicious Hooker, “ to seek far for proofs that the “ Apostles who began this order of regi-  
“ ment by Bishops, did it not but by divine  
“ instinct, when without such direction  
“ things of far less weight and moment  
“ they attempted not?.....Wherefore let  
“ us not fear to be herein bold and peremp-  
“ tory, that if any thing in the Church’s  
“ government, surely the first institution of  
“ Bishops was from heaven, was even of  
“ God; the Holy Ghost was the author  
“ of it<sup>s</sup>. ”

But the consideration of the arguments which lead us to conclude that Episco-

“ his Apostles, cannot be denied to be of divine institu-  
“ tion. A proposition so clear, that it were an injury  
“ to go about to prove it.....The carefullest ambassa-  
“ dor may perhaps swerve from his message;—these  
“ (which was one of the privileges of the Apostles) were  
“ through the guidance of God’s Spirit, in the acts of  
“ their function, inerrable. So then, if the foundation  
“ were laid by Christ, and the walls built up by his  
“ Apostles, the fabric can be no less than Divine.” *Bis-  
shop Hall, Episcopacy by Divine Right*, book i. chap. 7.  
See also Bishop Smalridge, Sermon xi.

<sup>s</sup> Hooker’s Ecclesiastical Polity, book vii. 8vo. edit.  
p. 135, 136.



pacy, thus divine in its original, is also of permanent obligation, and of the evasions by which men have usually attempted to elude their force, must be reserved to another Lecture.



## SERMON IV.

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MATT. xxviii. 20.

*Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of  
the world.*

IF the arguments which have been already adduced, to prove that the government which the holy Apostles by Divine instruction established for the Church was strictly episcopal, may be presumed to have been satisfactory, it remains to be considered why that form of polity is also to be deemed of permanent obligation, and immutably characteristic of the true Church of Christ.

But where, it might naturally be asked, is the occasion for such inquiry? does not the very fact of its apostolical original sufficiently imply the necessity of its perpetual observance? It forms, undoubtedly, the strongest possible presumption in its favour; but as no judicious advocate for Episcopacy would maintain the unqualified



principle, of observing with scrupulous minuteness every practice without exception, which even inspired Apostles may be found to have adopted; and as there have not been wanting those, who, taking advantage of this circumstance, have been disposed to argue, illogically it is true, but still perhaps with an air of plausibility sufficient to impose on the unreflecting and the weak, that, because it is plain that some apostolical practices are not immutably binding on us, therefore none whatever are<sup>a</sup>;—it is by no means unnecessary to assign satisfactory reasons for the distinction here claimed in favour of Episcopacy.

II. Our minds are, even without reflection, sufficiently familiarized to the relative importance of some apostolical practices, and the comparative insignificancy of others. Few, probably, can pretend to foresee the period at which the religious observance of the Lord's day will cease to be a Christian's duty; whilst as few, perhaps, would be found to contend for the necessity of

<sup>a</sup> See Law's Second Letter to Bishop Hoadly; Scholar Armed, vol. i. p. 357.



reviving the long neglected injunction, to  
“ abstain from things strangled and from  
“ blood<sup>b</sup>. ” If a reason were required for  
this marked discrimination between two  
practices, both of them confessedly apo-  
stolical, there could be no hesitation <sup>c</sup> in

<sup>b</sup> Acts xv. 20.

<sup>c</sup> “ May we not be obliged by some practices of the  
“ Apostles, where the nature of the thing and the con-  
“ sent of antiquity shew it to be equally necessary and  
“ important in all ages and conditions of the Church,  
“ without being tied down to the strict observance of  
“ every thing which the Apostles did, though it plainly  
“ appears, that it was done upon accidental and mut-  
“ able reasons? Can we not be obliged to observe the  
“ Lord’s day from apostolical practice, without being  
“ equally obliged to lock the doors where we are met,  
“ because in the Apostles’ times they locked them for  
“ fear of their enemies? We are to follow the prac-  
“ tices of the Apostles, as we ought to follow every  
“ thing else, with discretion and judgment, and not run  
“ headlong into every thing they did, because they were  
“ Apostles; nor yet think, that because we need not  
“ practise after them in every thing, we need do it in  
“ nothing. We best imitate them when we act upon  
“ such reasons as they acted upon, and neither make  
“ their occasional practice perpetual laws, nor break  
“ through such general rules, as will always have the  
“ same reason to be observed. If it be asked, how we  
“ can know what practices must be observed, and what  
“ may be laid aside? I answer, as we know articles of



replying, that the obligation to maintain the one was as permanent as the important object which it was graciously designed to answer, whilst the other, being calculated for a merely temporary purpose, was naturally allowed to cease, together with the prejudices<sup>d</sup> which at first made it expedient to impose it. Here then we discover an obvious distinction in favour of episcopal authority. As long as the Church of Christ shall continue to exist on earth as a visible society, so long will ecclesiastical government under some form or another, and authorized officers of some description, be absolutely indispensable;—and as long as one specific form of it may be clearly traced

“ faith from lesser truths; as we know occasional doc-  
“ trines from perpetual doctrines; that is, from the na-  
“ ture of the things, from the tenor of Scripture, and  
“ the testimony of antiquity.” *Law*, ibid. p. 358, 359.

“ If the reason why things were instituted may be  
“ known, and being known, do appear manifestly to be  
“ of perpetual necessity; then are those things also  
“ perpetual, unless they cease to be effectual unto that  
“ purpose for which they were at the first instituted.”  
*Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity*, book iii. 8vo. edit. vol. i.  
p. 397.

<sup>d</sup> See Hammond *in loco*.



to the Divine appointment, arrogant must he be, beyond the ordinary measure of self-sufficiency and pride, who could suppose it improveable by the ingenuity and invention of man; rash must he be, beyond the ordinary madness of human daring, who could fearlessly venture to supersede it by some system of man's devising.

Unfortunately, however, for the peace of the Christian Church, too many have been found thus arrogant and thus rash; and it may perhaps, in these times, be deemed even a prevalent idea, that, since man is notoriously capable of inventing for himself all that relates to political arrangement, and still more, since the characteristic peculiarities of different nations would be ill consulted by imposing on all the same political system; the original form of ecclesiastical government, even granting it to have been of divine appointment, was never designed as an immutable precedent for the universal Church of Christ.

“The mixture of those things by speech,” says the judicious Hooker, “which by nature are divided, is the mother of all error.



" To take away therefore that error which  
" confusion breedeth, distinction is requi-  
" site." It is readily conceded, that their  
principle, to a very considerable extent, is  
true; that numberless regulations, con-  
nected with the forms and the observances,  
and even, to a certain point, with the go-  
vernment of a Church, are wholly within  
the province of human direction;—and a  
wide field will thus be left open, in which  
national genius and local peculiarities may  
be fairly and beneficially consulted. But if  
they contend for the unqualified privilege  
of sweeping away, in one undistinguished  
mass, even those grand and characteristic  
outlines, the very landmarks of ecclesiasti-  
cal polity, the discriminating features, in  
which alone we can trace the visible form  
of that unity which is essential to the  
Church, and by a sacred regard to which  
alone we can hope either to restore or to  
preserve it, they are maintaining a principle,  
whose unsoundness may not only be pre-  
sumed from its manifest tendency to hope-  
less confusion and interminable schism, but

e Ecclesiastical Polity, book iii. 8vo. edit. vol. i. p. 364.



is also, I conceive, capable of the most satisfactory proof.

If it can be shewn, that the form of Church government for which I am contending, besides being of divine appointment, as it is hoped has been proved already, was for many previous ages favoured with the exclusive sanction, the avowed and undeviating support of the Almighty, every presumption hitherto suggested in favour of its immutability must receive the most unqualified confirmation; — and if, moreover, it was appointed for purposes essentially involving the question of eternal salvation, and such as the utmost extravagance of human pride cannot hope to attain by methods of its own devising, then the arguments for its permanent necessity assume the character of absolute demonstration.

1. Nothing is more evident, from the general tenor of Scripture language on the subject, than that the Jewish and Christian dispensations are not so much to be considered in the light of distinct systems, as in that of two successive parts of the same divine plan



for the redemption of fallen man<sup>f</sup>; that the Church of Christ did not strictly originate in his earthly ministry, but, having existed before in a more confined and imperfect state, was by him enlarged and purified and perfected; that Judaism, in short, was mystical Christianity, and Christianity nothing more than Judaism spiritualized. Accordingly, our Saviour thus assures the assembled multitudes, “Think not that I ‘‘ am come to destroy the law, or the pro-  
“ phets: I am not come to destroy, but to  
“ fulfil<sup>g</sup>.” Thus the Church of Christ is called the “new Jerusalem<sup>h</sup>;—St. Peter

“ Let us in this disquisition follow the example be-  
“ fore-mentioned of the Apostles and most primitive  
“ Fathers, to measure the Christian Church with its ex-  
“ act type, the Church under the Law; which are not  
“ two Churches, but two states of the same Church;  
“ for it is the same Christian Church from the first pro-  
“ mise of Christ (Gen. iii. 15.) to the end of the world;  
“ and therefore it is said (Heb. iv. 2.) that the Gospel  
“ was preached unto them as well as unto us. And  
“ these two states of the Church before and after Christ  
“ do answer, like a pair of indentures, to one another,  
“ the one being to an *iola* fulfilled in the other. (Matt. v.  
“ 18.)” *Leslie on the Qualifications requisite to administer  
the Sacraments; Works*, vol. ii. p. 730.

g Matt. v. 17.

h Rev. iii. 12. xxi. 2.



gives to Christians the very titles most appropriately descriptive of the Jews, “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people<sup>i</sup>.” St. John figuratively calls them “Jews<sup>k</sup>. ” St. Paul speaks of the Gospel as having been preached to the Jews of old<sup>l</sup>, as well as to Christians, and compares the calling of the Gentiles to the grafting of “a wild olive tree” among “the natural branch-es” of the “good olive tree<sup>m</sup>” of the Jewish Church; and throughout the whole of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the argument entirely depends on the close analogy observable between the two dispensations, and regards the ceremonies of the Jewish temple as exactly typical of the more spiritual service of Christianity.

In the language of one of the most learned of our old divines, “Our Saviour, though in reforming the house of Moses he was fain to pull it down, that it might be enlarged, yet both he that began the reformation, and his Apostles who fi-

<sup>i</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 9.

<sup>k</sup> Rev. ii. 9, and iii. 9.

<sup>l</sup> Heb. iv. 2.

<sup>m</sup> Rom. xi. 16—24.



" nished it, like men that were householders, used much of the old timber and materials, and conformed it too, as much as they could, after the manner of the old. They introduced as much of Judaism into the Christian religion as the nature of the reformation would well bear, and adhered as much as they could to the old, both in the matter and form " of the new economy." Amidst a variety of particulars in which the closest correspondence may be traced, the rite of baptism is well known to have been adopted from the Jewish Church; the sacrament of the Lord's Supper<sup>n</sup> has been clearly shown by learned men to be also of Jewish original; and the institution of the Lord's day can be considered as nothing more than a transfer of the Jewish sabbath.

If such, then, be the exact and striking analogy between the service of the Jewish

<sup>n</sup> Hickes's Previous Discourse to the Case of Infant Baptism; London Cases, p. 347.

<sup>o</sup> Ibid. p. 350. See the authorities there quoted, and the whole of the Previous Discourse, for a clear and satisfactory view of the connexion between the Jewish and Christian Churches.



Temple and the Christian Church, what should we more naturally be led to expect, than a corresponding resemblance in their priesthood also? and having discovered such a resemblance, what could we conceive more decisively illustrative, not only of its dignity and authority, but of its immutability and permanence?

Indeed, the theology of the primitive ages (after the example of Christ and his Apostles) attached peculiar importance to the parallel subsisting between the Law and the Gospel, as in other points, so also particularly in this. Thus St. Clement, when enforcing on the Corinthians the duty of ecclesiastical subordination, uses this illustration: “To the High Priest were allotted his proper offices;—to the Priests their proper place was assigned; and to the Levites their proper services were appointed; and the laity were restrained within the precepts of laymen.” Cy-

ρ Τῷ γὰς ἄρχεσθαι οἶδαι λειτουργίαις δέδηπται εἰσι, καὶ τοῖς  
ἱερεῦσιν οἶδας ὁ τόπος προστέτακται, καὶ Λευταις οἶδαι διακονίας  
ἐπίκεινται· ὁ λαϊκὸς ἀνθρώπος τοῖς λαϊκοῖς πρωτάργυροις δέδεται.  
Clem. Epist. ad Corinth. cap. 40.



prian<sup>q</sup> did not hesitate to claim the same authority for Christian Bishops as was given to the High Priest among the Jews; and even Jerome has the following remarkable passage; “That we may know that the apostolical traditions were taken from the Old Testament; what Aaron and his sons and the Levites were in the Temple, that the Bishops and Priests and Deacons claim to themselves in the Church.”

Thus, then, that threefold ministry, which is the characteristic feature of Episcopacy, may not only lay claim to an apostolical, and therefore, as has been already argued, to a divine original, but bears so close an analogy to a preceding ecclesiastical government, confessedly instituted by God himself, that its establishment by the Apostles deserves to be regarded, not as the introduction of a novelty, but as the continuation, under a more enlarged and purer

<sup>q</sup> Cyprian. Epist. ad Rogatianum. edit. Baluzii, p. 112.

<sup>r</sup> Ut sciamus traditiones apostolicas sumptas de Veteri Testamento, quod Aaron et filii ejus et Levitae in templo fuerunt, hoc sibi Episcopi et Presbyteri et Diaconi vendicent in Ecclesia. S. Hieron. Epist. ad Evar-  
grium.



form, of a system already distinguished by the most indisputable testimonies of the favour and protection of Heaven.

From these coincidences, so striking yet so undeniable, but one conclusion can possibly arise on the question before us. We may trace that consistency of purpose and uniformity of system, which we naturally look for in all the operations of an eternal and unchangeable God, and most of all, perhaps, in the grand scheme of human redemption, forming, as it does, one perfect whole, one gradually unfolding display of mercy and truth, even from the Fall of man;—we may recognize the wisdom of the Almighty<sup>s</sup>, in thus effectually obviating

“ The wisdom of God is here very evident, in ap-  
“ pointing the orders of the Christian ministry after the  
“ pattern of the Jewish Church, which was of his own  
“ appointment so long before. That there might be no  
“ uncertainty in a case of such consequence to the souls  
“ of men, there was no novelty, but a continuation of  
“ the like administration with that which had all along  
“ been known and acknowledged in the Church. Aaron  
“ was an high priest, with a ministry peculiar to him-  
“ self; under him there was an order of priests, twenty-  
“ four in number, who served by course in the daily sa-  
“ crifices and devotions of the tabernacle and temple,



that confusion and uncertainty in a case of such importance, which would have arisen from a decided rejection of all acknowledged precedent;—we may discover satisfactory reasons, why the sacred writers should not have laboured to inculcate in detail a form of polity already sufficiently notorious;—we may discover any thing, in short, rather than one remaining chance, that man might be allowed to innovate on a system possessing every claim to veneration, which the prescription of remote antiquity, the original appointment, and continued protection of Heaven could bestow; to put forth his sacrilegious hand, and remove the main pillars of the sacred edifice

“ and these were assisted by the whole tribe of the Le-  
“ vites. As the Law had its passover, its baptisms, its  
“ incense, its sacrifices, its consecrations, its benedic-  
“ tions, all to be realized under the sacraments and of-  
“ ferings of the Gospel, so its ministry was but a pat-  
“ tern of the ministry which is now amongst us; and we  
“ cannot mistake the one if we have an eye to the  
“ other: such is the goodness of God in directing us  
“ through all the confusion of the latter days, by a rule  
“ of such great antiquity, to the way of truth, and  
“ keeping us in it.” *Essay on the Church; Scholar Armed*,  
vol. ii. p. 23. third edition.



of the Church of Christ; and disturb the very “ foundations” of that “ city whose “ builder and maker is God<sup>1</sup>. ”

2. But should it be still maintained by some, that all this amounts to no more than a strong presumption, and that without decisive proof they are unwilling to relinquish their more enlarged ideas of their Christian liberty, proof still more decisive may yet be produced. It should however be observed, that I must presume that I am addressing those who believe in the efficacy of the sacraments, which Christ has ordained as the visible seals of the Gospel covenant, and in the necessity of a divinely authorized priesthood for their due administration. To digress at this time, for the sake of establishing these points to the satisfaction of others, would interrupt the whole course of the present discussion.

If the office of the Christian priest, then, be of the importance here presumed, it becomes a question of vital interest to us, how we can be satisfied of the validity of his commission. Now we are assured, that

<sup>1</sup> Heb. xi. 10.



" no man taketh this honour unto himself,  
" Let he that is called of God, as was  
" Aaron";"—and we can conceive but  
two ways in which this call can be ascer-  
tained; *viz.* by the visible, or otherwise mi-  
raculous interposition of the Holy Ghost,  
to which no one will now pretend; or by a  
succession of ordainers deriving their au-  
thority originally from such miraculous in-  
terposition, and transmitting it according  
to some method positively instituted by the  
same divine power\*. Accordingly, if we  
have recourse to the Scriptures for the in-

<sup>a</sup> Heb. v. 4.

\* "From this it appears, that there is an absolute  
necessity of a strict succession of authorized ordainers  
from the apostolical times, in order to constitute a  
Christian Priest. For since a commission from the  
Holy Ghost is necessary for the exercise of this office,  
no one can now receive it, but from those who have  
derived their authority in a true succession from the  
Apostles. We could not call our present Bibles the  
word of God, unless we knew the copies from which  
they were taken, were taken from other true copies,  
till we come to the originals themselves. No more  
could we call any true ministers, or authorized by the  
Holy Ghost, who have not received their commission  
by an uninterrupted succession of lawful ordainers."  
*Law's second Letter to Bishop Hoadly; Scholar Armed,*  
vol. i. p. 320. third edition.



formation which we require, we find the Apostles themselves<sup>y</sup> commissioned personally by their blessed Master, and by the visible descent of the Holy Ghost<sup>z</sup>, and ordaining the ministers of the Church, and transmitting to others their own authority for the same important purpose by the imposition of hands<sup>a</sup>; and in default of other information, the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, by proving the exclusive power of ordination possessed by them in the midst of presbyters and deacons, would of themselves sufficiently convince us, that to the apostolical or episcopal order alone it belonged to transmit their spiritual commission<sup>b</sup>.

<sup>y</sup> John xx. 21.

<sup>z</sup> Acts ii. 3.

<sup>a</sup> 2 Tim. i. 6. and 1 Tim. v. 22.

<sup>b</sup> "The order of the Clergy is not only a positive order instituted by God, but the different degrees in this order are of the same nature. For we find in Scripture, that some persons could perform some offices of the priesthood which neither deacons nor priests could do, though those deacons and priests were inspired persons, and workers of miracles. Thus Timothy was sent to ordain elders, because none below his order, who was a Bishop, could perform that office. .... It is no more consistent with Scripture to say that deacons or priests may ordain, than



Now as a mere man can no more become a priest by any method not specifically instituted by God, than the mere elements of water or wine could become effectual to the ends of a sacrament but by the divine appointment, let us once remove our episcopal succession, and we have <sup>c</sup> discarded the Christian priesthood; let us discard the priesthood, and we have lost even the means of partaking of the Christian sacraments, the very seals of the Christian covenant, the pledges of our

"that the laity are priests or deacons." *Law's Second Letter to Bishop Hoadly; Scholar Armed*, vol. i. p. 355, 356.

<sup>c</sup> "Do the Scriptures make it necessary that Timothy   
" (or some other Bishop) should be sent to Ephesus to  
" ordain priests, because the priests who were there could  
" not ordain? And do not the same Scriptures make it  
" necessary, that Timothy's successor be the only or-  
" dainer, as well as he was in his time? Will not priests  
" in the next age be as destitute of the power of or-  
" daining as when Timothy was alive? So that since  
" the Scriptures teach that Timothy, or persons of his  
" order, could alone ordain in that age, they as plainly  
" teach that the successors of that order can alone or-  
" dain in any age; and consequently the Scriptures  
" plainly teach a necessity of an episcopal succession."  
*Ibid.* p. 356.



eternal salvation. " So that," as the inge-  
nious Law most forcibly argues, " the ques-  
tion is not fairly stated, when it is asked,  
" whether Episcopacy, being an aposto-  
" lical practice, may be laid aside? but it  
" should be asked, whether an instituted  
" particular method of continuing the  
" priesthood be not necessary to be con-  
" tinued? whether an appointed order of  
" receiving a commission from God be not  
" necessary to be observed, in order to re-  
" ceive a commission from him? If the  
" case were thus stated, as it ought to be  
" fairly stated, any one would soon perceive,  
" that we can no more lay aside Episco-  
" pacy, and yet continue the Christian  
" Priesthood, than we can alter the terms  
" of salvation, and yet be in covenant with  
" God.<sup>d</sup>"

3. To weaken, however, the force of these arguments, so irresistibly decisive of the permanent necessity and immutability of the episcopal office, the advocates of the Presbyterian system maintain, that they can even produce authority from Scripture

<sup>d</sup> Law's Second Letter, &c. vol. i. p. 359, 360.



for ordination by mere elders; and they refer in particular, with the most triumphant confidence, to St. Paul's well-known exhortation to Timothy, "Neglect not the "gift that is in thee, which was given thee "by prophecy, with the laying on of the "hands of the presbytery!"

That the passage, as it stands in our translation, wears an aspect of some plausibility in their favour, arising from the limited sense which we now attach to the term *presbytery*, may perhaps be allowed; but that it is of any real force towards establishing the point in support of which it is so commonly adduced, may be most distinctly disproved.

In the first place, the learned are far from being unanimous in their interpretation of it. Authorities of no inconsiderable weight are to be found for referring the term *presbytery* to the *office*<sup>6</sup> conferred on

<sup>f</sup> 1 Tim. iv. 14.

<sup>g</sup> St. Jerome and St. Ambrose adopted this interpretation, (see Potter on Church Government, p. 271.) and what may appear more remarkable, it was allowed even by Calvin himself.—He says, "Paulus ipse alibi se, non "alios complures, Timotheo manus imposuisse com-



Timothy, not to those who ordained him to it; so that the verse would stand thus; “ Neglect not the gift of the presbyterate, “ which was given thee by prophecy, with “ the laying on of hands.”

But not to insist absolutely on this, it is far from following as a necessary consequence, that if the expression is to be interpreted of a company of persons, they were *presbyters*, strictly so called;—the primitive Fathers, at least, admitted no such idea; and the comment of Chrysostom on the text itself is decisively in point; “ The “ Apostle,” says he, “ speaks not here of “ Presbyters, but Bishops,” adding this rea-

“ memorat. Admoneo te, inquit, ut gratiam suscites quæ  
“ in te est per impositionem manum mearum. (2 Tim. i. 6.)  
“ Nam quod in altera epistola de impositione manuum  
“ Presbyterii dicitur (1 Tim. iv. 14.) non ita accepio quasi  
“ Paulus de seniorum collegio loquatur; sed hoc nomine  
“ ordinationem ipsam intelligo; quasi diceret, Fae ut  
“ gratiam, quam per manum impositionem recepisti,  
“ cum te Presbyterum crearem, non sit irrita.” Calvinus  
*Institut.* lib. 4. cap. 3. edit. 1607. p. 218.

The general signification however of the word πρεσβύτερος in other parts of the New Testament, no less than its position in the sentence before us, appears to make it very difficult to admit such an interpretation. See Schleusner, in voce πρεσβύτερος.



son, “ because presbyters did not ordain “ bishops ”.” There is indeed no small appearance of contradiction and absurdity in the very supposition that a company of mere *elders* could raise Timothy to that superiority of rank and dignity above themselves, which the two Epistles clearly prove him to have held; or rather, it is manifestly impossible that a spiritual office originally derivable from Christ alone, could be conferred on another by those who had received no commission to exercise it themselves.

But lastly, even were we to concede all that could possibly be demanded, that the expression in question denotes *presbyters* properly so called, there yet remains an absolute necessity of understanding the passage, so as not to contradict another in the same Epistles, which is liable to no objection or dispute whatever, where St. Paul thus expresses himself; “ Wherefore I put “ thee in remembrance that thou stir up “ the gift of God, which is in thee by the

ἥ οὐ περὶ πρεσβυτέρων φησὶν ἐνταῦθα, ἀλλὰ περὶ ἐπισκόπων  
οὐ γάρ ὅη πρεσβύτεροι τὸν ἐπίσκοπον ἔχειροτόνουν. Chrysostom in loco.



“ putting on of my hands!.” “ So that,” as Archbishop Potter argues, “ the utmost which can be inferred from this passage is, that *presbyters* sometimes imposed their hands together with an *apostle* or *bishop*; but there is not the least colour to conclude that they always did so, or that ever they did it without a *bishop*.” And after all, what is here conceded? that a practice might have prevailed in the primitive ages, some resemblance<sup>i</sup> to which is

<sup>i</sup> 2 Tim. i. 6.

<sup>k</sup> Potter on Church Government, p. 270, 271. See the question relative to Timothy’s ordination very clearly and satisfactorily discussed by Mr. Spry. Appendix to Bampton Lectures, p. 317—322.

<sup>l</sup> “ In the latter end of the fourth century, the fourth Council of Carthage decreed, *that in the ordination of Presbyters, all the Presbyters present should lay on their hands near the Bishop’s hand*. The design of which canon seems to have been, that the ordination of Presbyters should be performed with solemnity and deliberation, and to prevent Bishops from admitting into this order any whom their clergy did not approve; but there is not the least intimation, that the validity of orders was thought to depend on the Presbyters imposing their hands.....The custom of allowing Presbyters to lay on their hands with the Bishop in the ordination of Presbyters, was introduced by de-



even allowed in our own Episcopal Church. Whenever therefore it shall be admitted, that the ordinations of the Church of England are Presbyterian, then, but not before, it may perhaps be admitted that the ordination of Timothy might possibly have been Presbyterian also.

If however the most plausible text which the Scriptures can furnish, completely fails in establishing the validity of Presbyterian orders, the case must altogether be considered as an hopeless one, since the recorded opinions and practice of the early ages of the Church are too consistent, and too decisively in favour of the authority to ordain belonging to the Bishop alone, to allow of any question whatever. In the judgment of Chrysostom, “the imposition of hands,” which he considers as the Bishop’s prerogative, “was the chief of all ecclesiastical

“ agrees into most of the western churches; but in the  
“ oriental churches, they have still kept up the more  
“ ancient practice of excluding the Presbyters from  
“ having any concernment in ordination.” *Potter on  
Church Government*, p. 272, 273. See also Hooker’s  
Ecclesiastical Polity, book vii. ch. 7. Oxford edit. vol. iii.  
p. 138.



“ powers, and that which principally holds “ the Church together<sup>m</sup>. ” Even Jerome, as we have already seen, when most disposed to magnify the dignity of the Presbyter, admitted this<sup>n</sup> exception to his privileges. The Apostolical Canons, which, though they certainly have no claim to be regarded as what their name would indicate, must at least be allowed to bear testimony to the ancient usages of the Church, contain this decree: “ Let a Bishop be “ ordained by two or three Bishops;—a “ Presbyter and a Deacon, and the rest of “ the clergy, by one Bishop<sup>o</sup>. ” Calvin himself distinctly acknowledged the universal prevalence of this principle in the primitive ages<sup>p</sup>. It may indeed, without any fear

<sup>m</sup> Πάντων μάλιστα κυριώτατον, καὶ ὁ μάλιστα συνέχει τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν τὸ τῶν χειροτονιῶν. Chrysostom. Homil. xvi. in 1 Tim.

<sup>n</sup> See above, p. 141.

<sup>o</sup> Ἐπίσκοπος ὑπὸ ἐπισκόπων χειροτονεῖσθω δύο ἢ τριῶν πρεσβύτερος ὑπὸ ἑνὸς ἐπισκόπου καὶ διάκονος καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ κληρικοὶ. Apostol. Can. i.

<sup>p</sup> Veteres hoc saepe habent, non differre alia re ab episcopo presbyterum, nisi quia ordinandi potestatem non habeat. Calvin. Institut. lib. iv. cap. 4.



of contradiction, be asserted, that the records of the whole Church, to the period of the Reformation, can furnish but one well-attested instance even of an abortive attempt to confer orders without a Bishop; —that of Colluthus, an ambitious Presbyter of Alexandria<sup>q</sup>.

But it has been urged, that, should it even be allowed that the arguments for the episcopal succession, as the appointed means of conveying the spiritual commission, have all the soundness which its advocates would suppose, one obvious consideration will be found to destroy their whole force; for “ that this uninterrupted succession is subject to so great uncertainty, that if it be necessary, we can never say that we are in the Church.”

<sup>q</sup> Athanasius mentions the circumstance, and says that it was notorious that Ischyras, and all the rest whom Colluthus had pretended to ordain, were reduced to the condition of laymen, and ranked as such: “Οτι... πάντες οἱ παρ’ αὐτοῦ κατασταθέντες ἐν τῷ σχίσματι λαῖκοι γεγόνασι καὶ οὕτως συνέγονται, δῆλον καὶ οὐδὲν καθέστηκεν ἀμφιβολούν. S. Athanasiī Apolog. contra Arianos, cap. 12. edit. Benedict. tom. i. p. 134.

<sup>r</sup> See Law’s Second Letter to Bishop Hoadly; Scholar Armed, vol. i. p. 360.



If historical testimony, however, can convince us, we have evidence as satisfactory as such a case can fairly be supposed to admit. The Fathers, as it has already been observed, distinctly enumerated the successive Bishops of the Church, from the Apostles to their own times<sup>s</sup>. Many of the principal sees of Christendom can produce authentic catalogues of their Bishops, even from their original appointment; and there is scarcely a diocese in our own kingdom, which does not possess a perfect register<sup>t</sup> of its Bishops from the first conversion of our Saxon ancestors to the present hour.

It may be admitted, however, that, although there is thus the best reason to presume that there was the same regularity of succession in places where it has not been recorded, this alone cannot absolutely prove the fact;—it may be admitted also, that, inasmuch as it can rarely have occurred for a Bishop to consecrate his own suc-

<sup>s</sup> See above, p. 136, 137, 138.

<sup>t</sup> See Bishop Godwin, *De Præsulibus Angliae Commentarius*.



cessor, succession must not be regarded as transmission, and that the registers referred to must be considered rather as proving the continued prevalence of episcopal rule, than the unbroken descent of the episcopal commission. Still the fact in question deserves to be regarded as undeniably certain ; —for the universally received principle from the very foundation of the Church, that Bishops only could consecrate a Bishop, must have rendered it an utter impossibility for any one to have been received as a Bishop without such consecration. Can we in our own age conceive the remotest possibility of the fraudulent and unauthorized assumption of the episcopal character? can we in the age immediately preceding us<sup>"</sup>?

" " Is it not morally impossible, that in our Church  
" any one should be made a Bishop without episcopal  
" ordination? Is there any possibility of forging orders,  
" or stealing a bishopric by any other stratagem? No, it  
" is morally impossible, because it is an acknowledged  
" doctrine amongst us, that a Bishop can only be ordinat-  
" ed by Bishops. Now, as this doctrine must necessarily  
" prevent any one being a Bishop without episcopal or-  
" dination in our age, so it must have the same effect in  
" every other age, as well as ours; and consequently it



If this is notoriously impracticable, even in times of all others the least disposed to attach importance to a divine commission, how shall we entertain a doubt with regard to those earlier ages, when Episcopacy was regarded with universal veneration, and none presumed, but by episcopal ordination, to exercise even the inferior offices of the Christian ministry?

We acknowledge the descent of the present generation of men from the original parents of the human race, without any reference to the detail of a pedigree no longer possible to be traced. A moral certainty of uninterrupted transmission, more nearly parallel to this than may at first be imagined, may well lead us to acquiesce in the still continued legitimacy of the episcopal commission, though the successive

“is as reasonable to believe that the succession of Bishops was not broke in any age since the Apostles, as  
“that it was not broke in our own kingdom within these  
“forty years. For the same doctrine which preserves it  
“forty years, may as well preserve it forty hundred years,  
“if it was equally believed in all that space of time.  
“That this has been the constant doctrine of the  
“Church, I presume your Lordship will not deny.”  
*Law's Second Letter, &c. &c. p. 361.*



individuals, who make up the episcopal genealogy, the “*apostolici seminis traduces*,” as the primitive expression is, may now defy the most determined labours of antiquarian research.

Another objection, sometimes urged against the principles now contended for, is, that however certain we may deem the uninterrupted succession of Episcopacy, it can now avail us nothing, since we derive it only through the channel of Papal corruption. But this is evidently founded on a false notion of the nature of a Church. A corrupt Church may still continue to be a true Church. The Jews, in their most depraved state, still continued the only visible Church of God on earth. “The ‘Popish Church,’ says Bishop Hall\*, ‘in ‘that it hath in it that which pertains to ‘the definition of a Church, is a Church. ‘In the Church of Rome then,’ he concludes, ‘a true visibility may and doth ‘stand with a false belief.’” Notwith-

\* Advertisement to the Reconciler; Works, vol. ii. p. 422. See also Daubeney’s Guide to the Church, Appendix, p. 107—109, second edit.



standing all her errors and all her corruptions, tremendous as they are, it has pleased Almighty God to allow her to remain to this day a conspicuous branch of the universal Church of Christ; and to deny her claim to be considered as such, savours of prejudices altogether unworthy of a rational Protestant. It has been as correctly as ingeniously observed, that “the succession of “Church offices is no more affected by the “errors of Popery, than a man’s pedigree “is affected by his bodily distemper, or the “distempers of his parents; and if the man, “by alteratives and restoratives, is cured “with the blessing of God, he returns to “the state of his purer ancestors of a re-“mote generation.”

The unfounded prejudice, which would reject Episcopacy as itself a portion of Papal corruption, can require no confutation after tracing its origin to ages far antecedent to the rise of the Papal power. I would only remark on the grossness of the error which would consider the Church of Rome as even friendly to episcopal authority. By

y Short View, &c. Scholar Armed, vol. ii. p. 57.



the unprecedented subjection of Bishops to the absolute dominion of the Pope; by raising into consequence the various orders of regular clergy in total independence on episcopal jurisdiction; and finally, by systematically fomenting the religious divisions of those whom she could no longer retain within her own pale; she has done so much both to depress and to destroy Episcopacy, that some have not hesitated to declare, that the true source of Presbyterian innovation was to be found, not at *Geneva*, but at *Rome*<sup>2</sup>.

2 "They (the Dissenters) have been told that Episcopacy is Popery, because the Papists have Bishops. So have they Presbyters too, that is, parish priests: they have the Creed likewise, and the holy Scriptures; and all these must be Popish, if this be a good argument. But, are they willing to be undeceived? Then they must know, that Episcopacy has none so great an enemy as the Papacy, which would engross the whole episcopal power into the single see of Rome, by making all other Bishops absolutely dependent upon that which only they call the Apostolical Chair. And no longer since than the Council of Trent, the Pope endeavoured with all his interest to have Episcopacy, except only that of the Bishop of Rome, to be declared not to be *jure divino*. By which no other Bishops could claim any other power but what they had from him. But that Council was not quite so dege-



Again, it has been objected to Episcopacy as we now possess it, that it differs so entirely from the Episcopacy of the primitive ages, that the one cannot be considered as a precedent for the other; and that the powers assumed, and the extent of jurisdiction enjoyed, by modern Bishops, renders their office a manifest usurpation on the liberties of the Church. It is not of course to be pretended that an exact simi-

larity as to suiter this to pass. And the Jesuits and others, who disputed there on the Pope's part, used those same arguments against the divine right of Episcopacy, which from them and the Popish canonists and schoolmen, have been licked up by the Presbyterians and others of our Dissenters. They are the same arguments which are used by Pope and Presbyter against Episcopacy. When the Pope could not carry his cause against Episcopacy in the Council of Trent, he took another method, and that was to set up a vast number of Presbyterian priests, that is the regulars, whom he exempted from the jurisdiction of their respective Bishops, and formed them into a method and discipline of their own, accountable only to superiors of his and their own contriving, which is exactly the Presbyterian model..... And indeed whoever would write the true history of Presbyterianism, must begin at *Rome*, not at *Geneva*." *Leslie on the Qualifications requisite to administer the Sacraments; Works*, vol. ii. p. 731, 732.



larity in all respects is to be traced between the Bishops of modern Europe, and those of Asia Minor in the apostolic age. But the dissimilitude is in non-essentials<sup>a</sup> only, and depends principally on the wide difference as to external circumstances, necessarily existing between a Church in poverty and persecution, and a Church protected and supported by the civil power. "The simple hereupon," says the judicious Hooker<sup>b</sup>, "lacking judgment and "knowledge to discern between the na-

<sup>a</sup> "If we abstract from *Episcopal Government* all accidentals, and consider only what is essential and necessary to it, we shall find in it no more but this; an appointment of one man of eminent sanctity and sufficiency to have the care of all the churches within a certain precinct or diocese; and furnishing him with authority, (not absolute or arbitrary, but regulated and bounded by laws, and moderated by joining to him a convenient number of assistants,) to the intent that all the churches under him may be provided of good and able pastors; and that both of pastors and people, conformity to laws, and performance of their duties may be required, under penalties, not left to discretion, but by law appointed." *Chillingworth, Apostolical Institution of Episcopacy Demonstrated; Works*, ninth edit. p. 298.

<sup>b</sup> Hooker's Eccles. Polity, book vii. sec. 2. 8vo. edit. vol. iii. p. 114.



“ ture of things which changeth not, and  
“ those outward variable accidents, are  
“ made believe that a Bishop heretofore  
“ and now, are things in their very nature  
“ so distinct that they cannot be judged  
“ the same. Yet to men that have any  
“ part of skill, what more evident and plain  
“ in Bishops, than that augmentation or  
“ diminution in their prements, allowances,  
“ privileges, and such like, do make a dif-  
“ ference indeed, but no essential difference  
“ between one Bishop and another?”

As to that part of the objection which charges the Bishops of modern times with assuming powers unknown in the primitive Church, a grosser calumny could scarcely be imagined. Humble indeed are the pretensions to spiritual dominion which they advance, compared with the authority of their remote predecessors.—The objection, if any, is of the most opposite description; that owing to a combination of circumstances, chiefly arising from the intimate union of the ecclesiastical and civil powers, circumstances however which it is far more easy for them to deplore than to control,



their office has become comparatively inefficient.

With regard to the remaining objection, which points to the unreasonable extent of diocesan jurisdiction, and would represent the authority of the primitive Bishops as restricted to limits almost parochial, it has long since been most learnedly and satisfactorily confuted<sup>c</sup>. But the objection itself, even had it rested on well attested facts, could have had little weight with those who knew how to distinguish between the office of the Bishop and his local jurisdiction, the one a divine commission essen-

<sup>c</sup> See Dr. Maurice's Defence of Diocesan Episcopacy, in which it is proved, that in very many instances the dioceses in the primitive ages were more extensive than we usually find them at present. The Roman empire was generally parcelled out into cities, with territories belonging to them. Christianity accommodated itself to this groundwork, and in consequence the diocese was usually coextensive with the jurisdiction of the civil magistrate (p. 390—393). Theodoret's diocese was forty miles in length, and as much in breadth (p. 395). The ancient dioceses of Italy were much less numerous than the modern (p. 135). Those of France are supposed for the most part to retain the very limits which the Christians first assigned them, when they adapted them to the political divisions of the empire (p. 414).



tial to his episcopal character, the other varying with accidental circumstances, and often in a great measure dependant on civil appointment. In the judgment of St. Jerome<sup>d</sup>, “the Bishop of Eugubium was no less a Bishop than the Bishop of Rome.” The jurisdiction of a Bishop may be extensive, or it may be small; nay, through political commotion or ecclesiastical dissensions, it may be none; without impairing either his own apostolical commission, or his power of transmitting it to others:—there can assuredly be no more contradiction in the idea of a Bishop without a diocese, than in that of a Priest without a parish.

Lastly, the permanent necessity of the episcopal succession has been objected to from the impossibility of producing from Scripture any direct command to that effect. If however such an argument were allowed to have weight, and nothing could be deemed necessary but what is expressly required in the sacred volume, how could we prove the perpetual necessity of retain-

<sup>d</sup> Epist. ad Evagrium.



ing the Christian Sacraments as the ordinary means of Divine grace? where should we look for any decided obligation to continue the observance of the Lord's day? nay, what is, if possible, even more important, how could we regard even the canon of Scripture as the sure word of God, the infallible rule of faith and practice<sup>e</sup>? The unhappy abuse of tradition in the Church of Rome too naturally leads the zealous Protestant to associate its very name with all that is odious and unchristian. If St. Paul however could exhort his Thessalonian converts, to "hold fast the traditions they had been taught, whether by word or by his Epistles"; if he could thus exhort Timothy, "the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit

<sup>e</sup> See Law's Second Letter, &c. p. 353—355.

"If tradition is excluded by our Lord from being any part of the rule Christians are to walk by, all Scripture written barely upon a traditional account of things must likewise be excluded from being a part of that rule; consequently St. Luke's Gospel can be no part of it, because he declares he received what he there wrote from others." (chap. i. 2.) *Brett's Liturgies*, Preface, p. 16.

<sup>f</sup> 2 Thess. ii. 15.



“ thou to faithful men, who shall be able to “ teach others also<sup>g</sup>;” we may surely lay aside all unreasonable horror<sup>h</sup> of tradition in its subordinate and supplementary capacity, and perceive that we cannot consistently reject the unanimous testimony of the early Church in favour of Episcopacy, strictly conformable as it is to all the incidental notices of Scripture, without at the same time abandoning what we all concur in regarding as among the elements of Christianity itself.

Of all the principles of Christianity, it would perhaps be difficult to select any one, which for ages maintained its ground less questioned, or less resisted, than that of the episcopal transmission of the Christian priesthood. Of the very existence of the Church of Christ on any other than an episcopal foundation, our pious forefathers had no conception whatever. It was re-

<sup>g</sup> 2 Tim. ii. 2.

<sup>h</sup> “ The cause of the Reformation cannot suffer more than from such an injudicious defence as this principle, which in order to keep out Popery will shut out Christianity too.” Rogers, *Review of his Discourse on the Visible and Invisible Church*, p. 179.



served for the aspiring genius of a comparatively recent æra, to effect discoveries which, for fifteen centuries, had baffled the penetration of mankind; to develope mysteries hidden from the cotemporaries and fellow labourers of inspired Apostles; to throw contempt on principles which the blindness of heresy and the rancour of schism had not hitherto presumed to violate; to sow the seeds of interminable divisions, and supply the advocates of Papal tyranny with the only plausible argument they ever possessed against our glorious Reformation.

It is well deserving our attention, however, that the original framers of the Presbyterian discipline, so far from professing that decided hostility to Episcopacy which their successors afterwards adopted, distinctly avowed their veneration for it, and pleaded necessity alone as their excuse for its rejection, inextricably implicated as they found it with corruptions and usurpations of Rome. And Calvin himself pronounced those to be “worthy of every anathema” who would not reverence it, and submit themselves to it with the utmost obedience,



where it was to be met with in its legitimate  
c. .... i

But awful is the hazard to those who once desert the beaten path of truth for the bye-ways of error and schism; and impressive is the lesson afforded us by the followers of this deplorable innovation. Commencing with modest apologies for their unwilling rejection of a discipline, whose superior claims they even professed to allow, they soon became enamoured of the work of their own hands;—they searched

i “ Talem si nobis Hierarchiam exhibeant, in qua sic  
“ emineant Episcopi, ut Christo subesse non recusent,  
“ et ab illo tanquam unico capite pendeant.....tum  
“ vero nullo non anathemate dignos fatear, si qui erunt,  
“ qui non eam revereantur, summaque obedientia ob-  
“ servent.” *Calvin. de Necessit. Eccles. Reformand.*

Beza supposes it scarcely possible that any persons could be found to reject Episcopacy altogether; and thinks that no man in his senses could adopt such an opinion. “ Si qui sunt autem, (quod sane non mihi fa-  
“ cile persuaseris,) qui omnem Episcoporum ordinem re-  
“ jiciant, absit ut quisquam satis sanæ mentis furoribus  
“ illorum assentiatur.” *Beza ad Tractat. de Minist.  
Evang. Grad. c. 1.* He considers that England had retained her episcopal Hierarchy by the peculiar blessing of God, and expresses a wish that she may for ever enjoy it. “ Fruatur sane ista singulari Dei beneficentia,  
“ quæ utinam sit illi perpetua.” *Ibid. c. 18.*



the Scriptures, and imagined that they could discover in the imperfect notices of the proceedings of the infant Church, the very model of their own inventions; until, at last, they scrupled not to arrogate to themselves exclusively every claim to holiness and truth; and scarcely less departing from the principles of their founder, than from those of the primitive Church, they denounced Episcopacy as an unauthorized usurpation, intolerable to man, and in the sight of God, unholy, and antichristian, and abominable<sup>k</sup>.

From the attacks of those daring innovators, for a time but too successful, it pleased the Almighty to grant our Church a signal deliverance; an earnest, we might humbly hope, of his still continued favour

<sup>k</sup> "Here then let us consider and beware of the fatal progress of error! Calvin, and the Reformers with him, set up Presbyterian government, as they pretended, by necessity, but still kept up and professed the highest regard to the episcopal character and authority. But those who pretend to follow their example, have utterly abdicated the whole order of Episcopacy as antichristian, and an insupportable grievance." *Leslie on the Qualifications requisite to administer the Sacraments; Works*, vol. ii. p. 756.



and protection, if the profane indifference of too many of her professed adherents were not a far more reasonable cause for alarm, than the direct hostility of her avowed opponents.

Far be it from us to speak, or even to think uncharitably<sup>1</sup> of these, the compara-

1 “ That there is no salvation out of an episcopal communion; that those who carelessly separate themselves from their Bishops, do at the same time separate themselves from Christ; that the prayers which they make, or the prayers which are made for them, whilst they are in such a state of separation, are vain and ineffectual; that the word which they hear, and the sacraments which they receive from persons unauthorized to preach the word and administer the sacraments, convey no benefit to them, however otherwise well disposed, are severe opinions, which though maintained by very learned and pious men, we should, out of mere pity, be somewhat unwilling to make our own. For though, perhaps, we should not be able easily to confute them, yet such are the harsh consequences of them, that I should not care to embrace them. Sufficient it is for us, that in the communion of our Church we are safe; whether sacraments administered by persons uncommissioned are valid or not. Whether Presbyters can give a legal commission to administer the sacraments or not, is a matter of dispute;—but whether Bishops have a right of ordaining; whether those who are sent by them are lawfully sent; whether their authority to preach the



tively innocent posterity of the original authors of the separation. Educated as they are in principles which come recommended to them by the claims of prescription and hereditary attachment, who shall expect them to be adequately sensible of their devious course?—or if they were, who shall assert that, in those cases at least where the system has been legalized by the solemnity of national decisions, the remedy is now either obvious or even readily practicable? But with regard to those who, having been nurtured in the bosom of a pure and apostolical Church, shew themselves insensible to the blessing, and indifferent to its preservation, it is difficult to pronounce whether our predominant feeling should be regret for their dereliction of principle, or apprehension for its too probable consequences.

Without pretending to search for arguments in proof of what is altogether self-evident, I would ask, whether the most

“word and administer the sacraments is valid or not,  
“never was, never can be controverted.” *Bishop Smal-*  
*ridge, Sermon xi. p. 112.*



cursory gla<sup>ce</sup> at the disorganized condition of the Christian world is not sufficient to convince us, that the only chance of reunion depends on a recurrence to those principles, to the desertion of which these disorders may be traced?—whether, if Christians are once more to be restored, as, relying on the gracious promises of God, we humbly trust they will be, to “one fold, “under one Shepherd”,” it must not, to human apprehension at least, be under the paternal sway of a mild and enlightened Episcopacy, equally free from the chilling despotism of Popery on the one hand, and the factious and turbulent, and scarcely less overbearing spirit of Presbyterianism on the other<sup>m</sup>?

<sup>m</sup> John x. 16.

“ The judicious Hooker appears to have had a very correct apprehension of the tyranny which was to be endured in the succeeding generation, when, as the amiable Bishop Horne expressed it, “the little finger of “Presbytery proved to be thicker than the loins of “Prelacy.”.....“Great things,” says he, “are hoped “for at the hands of these new presidents, whom re- “formation would bring in. Notwithstanding the time “may come, when Bishops, whose regiment doth now “seem a yoke so heavy to bear, will be longed for again,



Of this good “leaven” a remnant, yea, praised be God for his mercies, far more than a remnant, is yet left to us. Be it ours then to cherish that “leaven,” which in his good time may “leaven the whole<sup>o</sup>” mass of discord and confusion and schism. And if the unbiassed suffrage of foreign nations once pronounced our Church “the “light of the Reformation<sup>p</sup>;” if the com-

“even by them that are the readiest to have it taken off  
“their necks. But in the hands of Divine Providence  
“we leave the ordering of all such events.” *Ecclesiastical Polity*, book vii. c. 1. 8vo. edit. vol. 3. p. 113.

<sup>o</sup> Matt. xiii. 33.

<sup>p</sup> Bishop Hall, after citing the testimony of Beza, and other eminent foreign Divines, in favour of our reformed Episcopacy, proceeds thus; “What should I “need to thicken the air with a cloud of witnesses? “There is witness enough in the late synod of Dort. “When the Bishop of Landaff had in a speech of his “touched upon Episcopal government, and showed “that the want thereof gave opportunities to those di- “visions which were then on foot in the Netherlands, “Boggermaurus, the president of that assembly, stood “up, and in a good allowance of what had been spoken, “said, *Domine, non sumus adeo felices*, ‘Alas! my Lord, “we are not so happy.’.....What do I single out a few? “All the world of men, judicious, and not prejudiced “with their own interests, both do and must say thus, “and confess with learned Casaubon, Fregevill, and



passion of God, notwithstanding her manifold imperfections, still allows her to preserve her purity of doctrine and her truly apostolical polity; still permits her to remain, beyond all question, the most eminent branch of Protestant Episcopacy;—be it ours to manifest a more lively sense of these inestimable blessings, a more earnest zeal for the maintenance of principles too long neglected and impugned; that so she might hereafter be “set up as an ensign to “the nations<sup>q</sup>,” as a light to “guide” their returning “feet into the way of peace!”

“ Saravia, that no Church in the world comes so near  
“ the apostolic form, as the Church of England.” *Bishop Hall, Episcopacy by Divine Right*, book i. chap. 4.  
p. 14—16.

“ Quod si me conjectura non fallit, totius reformatio-  
“ nis pars integerrima est in Anglia, ubi cum studio  
“ veritatis viget studium antiquitatis.” *Is. Casaubon.*  
Epist. 709. ad Salmasium.

<sup>q</sup> *Isaiah xi. 12.*

<sup>r</sup> *Luke i. 79.*



## SERMON V.

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ROMANS X. 15.

*How shall they preach, except they be sent?*

THAT separation from our Establishment is, in numerous instances, intimately connected with most inadequate ideas of the importance and necessity of a divinely authorized priesthood, for the due administration of the Sacraments and other offices of our holy religion, and that, in some cases, the very notion of such necessity has been altogether abandoned, is sufficiently notorious.

This class of errors is perhaps to be considered rather as among the occasional consequences of schism, of modern schism more especially, than as one of its original and natural causes;—but it is not on that account the less formidably hostile to the cause of Christian unity. The schisms of the earlier ages, indeed, were seldom, if



ever, productive of this unhappy result. A regularly ordained, though schismatical priesthood, was retained under every separation, as indispensably requisite to the existence of a Christian society. But the divisions of the Church, which have occurred subsequently to the Reformation, having for the most part commenced under circumstances which effectually cut off the succession of a divinely appointed ministry, men learnt by degrees to reconcile themselves to a loss which they could not consistently repair, and at last to despise, as altogether worthless and insignificant, an advantage which was no longer to be obtained, but by the humiliating process of retracing their steps to the deserted fold of the Church, and renouncing prejudices already become inveterate by habit, if not originally derived from education.

The advocates of the Presbyterian discipline having continued to assert, with some show of plausibility, the claims of their ministry to the apostolical succession, however some of the powers of the priesthood<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> They reject the power of absolution. See a Short



may have suffered in their hands, have never wholly abandoned the idea of its divine commission. But with regard to a variety of other sects, it is sufficiently obvious, that, when once that fanaticism has evaporated, which can recognize indubitable evidence of the appointment of Heaven in the rant of enthusiasm or the volubility of natural eloquence, their only refuge from self-condemnation is to be found in decrying, as vanity and superstition, every pretence to spiritual authority; in maintaining the full sufficiency of all ordinary Christians for the ministerial office; and, by a consequence as unavoidably necessary as it is deplorable, in lowering and explaining away every priestly function, till it falls in with the level of those capacities which they have assigned for its performance. Hence authoritative preaching, intercessory prayer, benediction, and absolution, are exploded as the dreams of dotage, or the fictions of priest-

View of the present State of the Argument between the Church of England and the Dissenters; Scholar Armed, third edit. vol. ii. p. 51.



craft ;—the very sacraments, if retained at all,<sup>b</sup> are not retained as the efficacious means of grace ; Baptism becomes a mere initiatory ceremony ; the Eucharist a bare commemoration<sup>c</sup>.

Such principles as these, though scarcely

<sup>b</sup> “ If all Christians are equal and undistinguished by any commission from one another ..... , then the sacraments appointed by Christ cannot be administered, nor the word preached among them ; for who shall officiate in these ordinances ? ..... And, therefore, they who contrived the sect of Quakers, which comes the nearest to this scheme, found themselves obliged to reject the sacraments, as useless and unnecessary, from a conviction, that it was impossible to retain these ordinances, without selecting some persons from others to officiate in them.” *Rogers on the Visible and Invisible Church*; fourth edition, p. 127, 128.

<sup>c</sup> “ When the Dissenters of this country, instead of remaining satisfied with having separated from the corrupt Church of Rome, thought it necessary, moreover, to separate from the priesthood of the Church of England, they found themselves under the necessity of doing as well as they could without it. Instead, therefore, of joining with their fellow-Christians in partaking of a feast upon a sacrifice which they could not have, they sat themselves down, under the idea of partaking of the Lord’s Supper, to eat and drink bread and wine in memory of a departed friend.” *Daubeny’s Guide to the Church*, Appendix, second edition, p. 314.



amounting to a positive argument for dissent, must nevertheless be considered as in the highest degree calculated to cherish and confirm it. For men thus rendered easy and self-satisfied in religious separation, and insensible to all the advantages from which it precludes them, are effectually placed beyond the reach of some of the strongest motives to conformity, and would be little solicitous to return to the bosom of the Church, although the primary causes of their defection might hereafter be forgotten, or even altogether cease to exist.

It were well for us, if the evil could be regarded as confined within such limits as these; it were well, if these degrading ideas of the Christian ministry had infected those only to whom they are naturally acceptable, and in some sort necessary, as the apology for their separation. Whether from the contagion of prevailing opinion, or from the general silence of the Clergy themselves on such topics, a want of due apprehension with respect to the divine authority of the Christian priesthood may be



considered as even characteristic of the age; and multitudes of the sincerest friends to the Established Church, of those who would not willingly be thought to question or neglect any one of the institutions of their Saviour, would, I apprehend, if their sentiments were strictly analyzed, be found to regard the Clergy in a light little consistent with the dignity of “ambassadors for Christ,”<sup>d</sup> and to attend their ministrations with little of that faith in their practical efficacy, which his positive appointment warrants, or, more properly, demands. Nay, I fear that even charity itself must admit, that some even of these “ambassadors for Christ” are themselves but faintly impressed with the consciousness of their divine commission, have no lively sense of the treasure which they are appointed to bear, of their actual authority to bless, to absolve, and to dispense the means of grace, as the especial delegates of Heaven.

Now, as it will be recollected that one of the leading arguments for the necessity of the episcopal succession was derived from

<sup>d</sup> 2 Cor v. 20.



the importance of the Christian priesthood, which, however, the limits of my discourse, as well as the case then more immediately under review, permitted me rather to allude to than to establish; and as it should appear that there is amongst us a numerous class with whom this argument must in a greater or less degree lose its force, according to the degree in which their convictions on this important point are vague and defective, it has become necessary to the general object of these Lectures, to give this branch of the subject a more particular consideration. But, on the other hand, if it can be shown that it has always from the earliest times been the method of Almighty God to dispense his spiritual favours to mankind by the hands of particular individuals commissioned by himself, and that the divine commission is still indispensably necessary to the validity of the ministerial functions, it will be satisfactory to recollect, as a point already, it is presumed, distinctly ascertained, that our excellent Church still enjoys the inestimable benefit of this commission in its fullest



extent and most undoubted legitimacy, together with the means of continuing it, by the divine blessing, to the end of time.

I. From a variety of facts recorded in the Scriptures of the Old Testament it appears, even from the remotest period, to have been the ordinary method of the providence of God, to communicate his blessings and inflict his judgments by the intervention of human agents deputed to act in his name. Thus in the patriarchal times, long antecedently to the established priesthood of Aaron, Noah blessed Shem and Japheth, and pronounced a curse on Canaan<sup>e</sup>; and Isaac blessed Jacob, to the exclusion of Esau<sup>f</sup>.—Thus, too, in the instance of Abimelech, notwithstanding the known “integrity of his heart,” the intercession of Abraham was necessary for his recovery. “And God said unto him, he “is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, “and thou shalt live....So Abraham prayed “unto God, and God healed Abimelech<sup>g</sup>.” Again, when the wrath of God was kindled

<sup>e</sup> Genesis ix. 25—27.

<sup>f</sup> Genesis xxvii.

<sup>g</sup> Genesis xx.



against Eliphaz and his two friends, their burnt offering could not obtain their pardon without the prayer of Job;—“ My servant Job shall pray for you; for him will I accept<sup>h.</sup>” Advancing to the period of the Mosaic dispensation, we read, “ The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee, and keep thee, &c.....And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them<sup>i.</sup>” And again, “ The priests the sons of Levi shall come near; for them the Lord thy God hath chosen to minister unto him, and to bless in the name of the Lord<sup>k.</sup>” In short, to cite the various passages which might be produced to illustrate the exclusive authority of the Levitical priesthood would be an endless task.

But a reference to those awful instances which mark the peculiar wrath of God against the unauthorized usurpation of the

<sup>h</sup> Job xlvi. 7—10.

<sup>i</sup> Numbers vi. 22—27.

<sup>k</sup> Deut. xxi. 5.



priestly functions, is too decisively calculated to illustrate the subject before us, to allow of its being omitted. When Saul, urged by the distressed condition of his troops, and the immediate expectation of the attack of the Philistines, had at last ventured to offer a burnt offering himself without waiting for the return of Samuel, this was the solemn denunciation of the Prophet; “Thou hast done foolishly: thou “hast not kept the commandment of the “Lord thy God, which he commanded “thee: for now would the Lord have “established thy kingdom upon Israel for “ever. But now thy kingdom shall not “continue<sup>k</sup>.” Thus also when the heart of king Uzziah, after a long series of victory and prosperity, was “lifted up to his “destruction,” and he “went into the tem-“ple of the Lord to burn incense upon the “altar of incense,” and obstinately re-“sisted the remonstrances of the priests, “while he was wroth with the priests, the “leprosy even rose up in his forehead be-“fore the priests in the house of the Lord,”

<sup>k</sup> 1 Sam. xiii. 6—14.



and “unto the day of his death, he was “cut off from the house of the Lord,” and from the administration of his kingdom<sup>k</sup>. Awfully impressive is the lesson to be derived from the sudden death of Uzzah, for having put forth his hand to hold the ark of God, though but to save it from falling; —“the anger of the Lord was kindled “against Uzzah; and God smote him there “for his error, and there he died by the ark “of God!” Still more tremendous, if possible, was the visitation which attended the presumption of Korah and his confederates, when, the more effectually to record the judgment of the Almighty on such unhallowed presumption, the very censers with which they had offered incense “were “made broad plates for a covering of the “altar, to be a memorial unto the chil-“dren of Israel, that no stranger, which is “not of the seed of Aaron, come near to “offer incense before the Lord<sup>m</sup>.” Of Jeroboam, who “made priests of the low-“est of the people, which were not of the

<sup>k</sup> 2 Chron. xxvi. 16—21.

<sup>l</sup> 2 Sam. vi. 6, 7.

<sup>m</sup> Nuimb. xvi. 39, 40.



" sons of Levi," it is emphatically said, that he " made Israel to sin ;" and moreover, that " this thing became sin unto the house " of Jeroboam, even to cut it off, and to de- " stroy it from off the face of the earth ".<sup>n</sup>

Shall it be argued that the Israelites were placed under a dispensation so peculiar, that it is in vain to form any judgment of a Christian's duty from the laws imposed on them? Unquestionably, whatever may be true of certain minute observances, no argument as a general principle, or as applicable to the case before us, could be more fallacious; for it must be founded on one or other of these suppositions;—either that an eternal unchangeable God has on some points altered his views of human offences, and can deem that innocent in one age, which he held to be highly criminal in another; or else that a Christian can be guilty of no crime analogous, even in spirit, to the invasion of the Jewish priesthood. Because God no longer visibly interposes in defence of his sacred institutions, shall we conceive him to be altogether un-

<sup>n</sup> 1 Kings xii. 31, xiii. 34, and xxii. 52.



offended by their violation! As well might we believe, that he has no vengeance in store for rapacity and oppression and violence, because no prophet now denounces temporal retribution on an Ahab or a "Jezebel. And if "the liberty wherewith "Christ has made us free," removes us from all possibility of falling into offences parallel to Korah's presumption, how shall we account for the mention made by St. Jude of those who "perished in the gain-  
" saying of Core<sup>p</sup>?"

" Whatsoever things were written afore-  
" time," says St. Paul, " were written for  
" our learning<sup>q</sup>;" and so far from their  
having been less usefully written, because  
the Jews were subjected to a temporal dis-  
pensation, and in that respect dissimilar to  
our own, the example only becomes the  
more effectual to our instruction. Assured  
though we are, that "the wrath of God is  
" revealed from heaven against all ungod-  
" liness and unrighteousness of men<sup>r</sup>;" yet  
as the just measure of Divine retribution is  
reserved for a future state, we might for

<sup>o</sup> 1 Kings xxi. 17—24.

<sup>p</sup> Jude 11.

<sup>q</sup> Rom. xv. 4.

<sup>r</sup> Rom. i. 18.



the present form the most erroneous ideas or the comparative nemousness of particular sins. What can bid so fair to rectify our judgment in these cases, as the lively and sensible display of the vengeance of the Almighty on the various transgressions of his peculiar people? In the long catalogue of human offences, is there one in which men more readily excuse themselves than that presumption which seeks salvation by its own devices, to the neglect or exclusion of those persons and methods which God has instituted for that momentous purpose?—and on the other hand, is there one of which a careful perusal of the Jewish Scriptures can more irresistibly establish the guilt and danger?

The Jews indeed, even in their most corrupted state, appear never to have lost sight of the established principle, that the Divine commission was necessary for the performance of the ministerial functions. This is evident from the question put by them to John the Baptist; “Why baptizest thou, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?”

John i. 25.



That the Gospel dispensation, though it superseded the Levitical priesthood, introduced another, to the validity of whose ministrations the Divine appointment was as indispensable as ever, may be undeniably proved. Of the priesthood St. Paul says, "No man taketh this honour unto himself, " but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. "So also Christ glorified not himself to be "made an High Priest; but he that said "unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have "I begotten thee<sup>t</sup>." Thus even our blessed Saviour himself entered not on his sacred office, till, at the age of about thirty years, he was outwardly and visibly commissioned by the Holy Ghost<sup>u</sup>. By himself personally were his Apostles invested with especial authority to preach<sup>v</sup>, to baptize<sup>w</sup>, to bless the elements of bread and wine in commemoration of his sacrifice<sup>x</sup>, and finally with the power which has ever been esteemed the highest assigned to the Christian ministry, that of the remission and retaining of sins<sup>y</sup>.

<sup>t</sup> Heb. v. 4, 5.    <sup>u</sup> Luke iii. 22, 23.    <sup>x</sup> Luke vi. 13.  
<sup>y</sup> John iv. 1, 2.    <sup>z</sup> Luke xxii. 19.    <sup>a</sup> John xx. 23.



The spiritual commission, thus outwardly conferred on them, they transmitted to others by the outward sign of the imposition of hands, and none presumed to officiate in the Christian Church without an authority thus derived from the Apostles. When elders were ordained in every Church<sup>b</sup>, they were the *Apostles* who ordained them; when the people were directed to "look out seven men full of "the Holy Ghost and of wisdom"<sup>c</sup>" for the office of deacons, it was that the *Apostles* might "appoint" them; and though they were all men of distinguished merit, though Stephen in particular is described as "a "man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost"<sup>d</sup>," they could not exercise the functions of this the least of the Christian ministries, till "the "Apostles had prayed, and laid their hands "on them."<sup>e</sup> "For this cause," says St. Paul

<sup>b</sup> Acts xiv. 23.    <sup>c</sup> Acts vi. 3.    <sup>d</sup> Acts vi. 5.

<sup>e</sup> Acts vi. 6. Gifts and abilities indeed are throughout the New Testament invariably distinguished from the spiritual commission. There is another remarkable instance of this in Philip, the Deacon, who though himself a worker of miracles, merely converted and baptized the inhabitants of Samaria: but when the Apostles were



to Titus, “ left I thee in Crete, that thou  
“ shouldest ordain elders in every city<sup>f</sup>;”  
manifestly implying, that their ordination  
was not to be effected, but by the instru-  
mentality of one who, like Titus, had him-  
self received the Divine and Apostolical  
commission.

The terms in which the Apostles con-  
stantly speak of their office, strongly ex-  
press their conviction of their especial and  
exclusive appointment. “ Let a man so ac-  
“ count of us as of the ministers of Christ,  
“ and stewards of the mysteries of God<sup>g</sup>.”  
“ We are ambassadors for Christ, as though  
“ God did beseech you by us: we pray  
“ you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to  
“ God<sup>h</sup>.” Under the same impression it  
is that St. Paul puts the emphatical ques-  
tion, “ How shall they preach, except they  
“ be sent<sup>i</sup>? ” and if they cannot preach,  
he might have added, an office always

informed of his success, “ they sent unto them Peter  
“ and John,” who “ laid their hands on them, and they  
“ received the Holy Ghost.” Acts viii. 14. 17.

<sup>f</sup> Titus i. 5.      <sup>g</sup> 1 Cor. iv. 1.      <sup>h</sup> 2 Cor. v. 20.

<sup>i</sup> Rom. x. 15.



esteemed within the qualifications of the lowest order of ministers, much more how shall they attempt the higher ministrations of absolution, benediction, and the consecration of the Eucharist?

Closely analogous to the necessity of the Divine appointment of the ministers of Christ, is the obligation on the people to shew obedience and respect to these their spiritual pastors. They are commanded to “ obey those who have the rule over them, “ and submit themselves<sup>k</sup>;” to “ esteem “ them very highly in love for their works’ “ sake!.” Thus our blessed Saviour says to his chosen followers: “ He that heareth “ you heareth me; and he that despiseth “ you despiseth me; and he that despiseth “ me despiseth him that sent me<sup>m</sup>.” And St. Paul declares, “ he that despiseth, de-“ spiseth not man, but God<sup>n</sup>. ”

Neither is it without ample cause, that this necessity of hearing and obeying their appointed teacher is imposed on the fol-

<sup>k</sup> Heb. xiii. 17.

<sup>l</sup> 1 Thess v. 13.

<sup>m</sup> Luke x. 16.

<sup>n</sup> 1 Thess. iv. 8.



lowers of Jesus: and if they are thus required to pay submission to a man “of like passions with” themselves, assuredly it is not for his honour, but for their happiness, not as useful to him, but as beneficial to themselves. They are required to attend on his ministrations, because it has pleased God to constitute him the ordinary channel of conveying his spiritual blessings;—because, though “taken from among men,” he “is “ordained for men, in things pertaining to “God,” ordained for the sake and benefit and assistance of men, in all that relates to Almighty God, and to that eternal salvation which God only can bestow;—because the ministers of the Gospel are “ambassadors for Christ,” and like all other ambassadors, are the authorized messengers of their Sovereign, and exclusively charged with the glad tidings of his kingdom;—because to them, and no others, God “hath committed the word of reconciliation”;—hath committed it to them, to make his gracious offers of peace and pardon to returning penitents, and appointed their of-

<sup>n</sup> Heb. v. 1.

<sup>o</sup> 2 Cor. v. 19.



fice to be essentially instrumental in sealing their reconciliation with himself. Thus, though the “prayers and the alms” of the devout Cornelius had “come up for a memorial before God,” his admission to the knowledge and the privileges of the Gospel was to be effected by the ministry of St. Peter<sup>o</sup>. Thus St. James directs the sick “to call for the elders of the Church,” to “pray over him,” declaring, that “the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him<sup>p</sup>.<sup>r</sup>

If such then be the language of Scripture on the divine institution of the Christian priesthood and the importance of its functions, in what light shall we regard the daring temerity of those, who imagine that it rests with themselves to appoint the creatures of their own capricious choice to act in God’s tremendous name? If it be treason to act in the name even of an earthly monarch without especial authority from himself, can we deem it less than treason-

<sup>o</sup> Acts x. 1—6.

<sup>p</sup> James v. 14, 15.



able to assume an unauthorized<sup>9</sup> commission from the “ King of kings?” Must it not, accordingly as it is done in presumption, or in ignorance, be either dreadful blasphemy, or blind infatuation?

“ It is a plain and obvious truth,” says an ingenious Divine, “ that no man or “ number of men, considered as such, can “ any more make a priest, or commission “ a person to officiate in Christ’s name, “ as such, than he can enlarge the means “ of grace, or add a new sacrament for the “ conveyance of spiritual advantages. The

¶ “ The honour of the priesthood must needs be very high, when it is reckoned a glory even to Christ;— “ and he could not glorify himself to be a Priest, without an express commission from his Father. And the reason is plain, because none can make an attorney, a representative, or commissioner, that is, a Priest, of God, to transact or seal covenants with mankind in his name, but he himself. How dreadful then.....to consider the lamentable state of those communities amongst us, who think that any three or four of them can set up a Church by their own authority! and where every mechanic, boy, or girl, may take this honour to themselves, of standing in God’s stead to the people, and transacting with them in his tremendous name, and by his authority!” *Leslie’s Case of the Regale and of the Pontificate; Works, vol. i. p. 661.*



“ ministers of Christ are as much positive  
“ ordinances as the sacraments, and we  
“ might as well think that sacraments not  
“ instituted by him might be means of  
“ grace, as those pass for his ministers  
“ who have no authority from him.” “ In  
“ that they are Christ’s ambassadors and  
“ his labourers,” says the judicious Hooker,  
“ who should give them their commission  
“ but he whose most inward affairs they  
“ manage? Is not God alone the Father  
“ of spirits? Are not souls the purchase  
“ of Jesus Christ? What angel in heaven  
“ could have said to man, as our Lord did  
“ unto Peter, *Feed my sheep;—preach;*  
“ *—baptize;—do this in remembrance of*  
“ *me;—whose sins ye retain, they are re-*  
“ *tained; and their offences in heaven par-*  
“ *doned, whose faults you shall on earth*  
“ *forgive?* What think we? Are these ter-  
“ restrial sounds, or else are they voices  
“ uttered out of the clouds above?” And he adds, “ The power of the ministry of  
“ God translateth out of darkness into

<sup>r</sup> Law’s First Letter to Bishop Hoadly; Scholar Armed, vol. i. p. 286.



“ glory; it raiseth men from the earth,  
“ and bringeth God himself from heaven;  
“ by blessing visible elements it maketh  
“ them invisible grace; it giveth daily the  
“ Holy Ghost; it hath to dispose of that  
“ flesh which was given for the life of the  
“ world, and that blood which was poured  
“ out to redeem souls; when it poureth ma-  
“ lediction upon the heads of the wicked,  
“ they perish; when it revoketh the same,  
“ they revive. O wretched blindness, if  
“ we admire not so great power; more  
“ wretched, if we consider it aright, and  
“ notwithstanding imagine that any but  
“ God can bestow it<sup>s</sup>!”

If such blind presumption were in itself, and its own nature, less glaringly offensive in the sight of God, than the Scriptures assure us that it is, what could be more deplorable, if rightly considered, than the actual privations to which it unavoidably subjects us? That the holy sacraments, under all ordinary <sup>t</sup>circumstances at least, are ac-

<sup>s</sup> Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, book v. c. 77. 8vo.  
edit. vol. ii. p. 424.

<sup>t</sup> “ Because the goodness of God, if he pleases, may supply.....even the want of sacraments in those re-



tually necessary to our salvation, we have the positive assurances of Christ himself.  
“ Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a  
“ man be born of water and of the Spirit,  
“ he cannot enter into the kingdom of  
“ God.” And again, “ Except ye eat the  
“ flesh of the Son of man, and drink his  
“ blood, ye have no life in you<sup>x</sup>. ” Now, as  
Bishop Reynolds justly argues, “ Necessary  
“ ordinances presuppose necessary officers  
“ to administer them; Christ hath ap-  
“ pointed necessary ordinances to be to  
“ the end of the world administered; there-  
“ fore the officers who are to administer  
“ them are necessary likewise. He did not  
“ religious societies which reject them.....those extraor-  
“ dinary mercies, being secrets which belong to God  
“ himself, ought to be no encouragement to us to cast  
“ off his institutions, or to continue in the want of  
“ them, when we may have them. It is not therefore  
“ reasonable, as I conceive, to presume that God, though  
“ infinitely merciful and good, will supply unto us the  
“ want of such things which we may supply ourselves  
“ with, but will not. I had much rather therefore desire  
“ you not to trust to those extraordinary supplies, which,  
“ when God grants, we cannot tell whether he grants  
“ or no.” *Hickes on the Christian Priesthood*, Preface,  
p. 198.

<sup>u</sup> John iii. 5.

<sup>x</sup> John vi. 53.



" appoint a work to be done, and leave it  
" to the wide world who should do it, but  
" committed the ministry of reconciliation  
" to stewards and ambassadors by him se-  
" lected for that service?" A sacrifice in  
its very nature implies a priest; the Chris-  
tian sacrifice<sup>z</sup>, which, by an obvious analogy,

y Bishop Reynolds; Works, folio, p. 1055. "It is not  
" a consideration of so little importance as some men  
" imagine, by whose ministry we offer up our prayers to  
" God, or through whose hands we receive his ordi-  
" nances. What allowance may be made for this defect  
" in the ministry, where it is occasioned by necessary  
" and unavoidable impediments, is not here in question;  
" but *ordinarily* we are assured, the blessings and graces  
" which Christianity teaches us to expect from these  
" ordinances, can only be derived to us by them, when  
" administered according to Christ's institution by per-  
" sons regularly called, as he has directed; and where  
" such may be had, and we may lawfully join with them,  
" and use their ministry, to depart from them is to rebel  
" against the authority of Christ, who appointed them."  
*Rogers on the Visible and Invisible Church*, fourth edit.  
p. 64.

z "The Lord's Supper was always believed to succeed  
" in the place of sacrifices; consequently, as none be-  
" side the high priest and inferior priests were permitted  
" to offer sacrifices under the Jewish law; so the Lord's  
" Supper was consecrated by none but Bishops and  
" Presbyters, who alone are Priests in the Christian  
" sense of that name.....In the Christian Church there



the Eucharist may be considered, demands the Christian Priest; and every other or-

“ is only one proper sacrifice, which our Lord offered  
“ upon the cross; and consequently Christians cannot  
“ partake of any sacrifice, in a literal and strict sense,  
“ without allowing transubstantiation. Lest therefore  
“ they should want the same pledge to assure them of the  
“ divine favour, which the Jews enjoyed, our Lord ap-  
“ pointed the elements of bread and wine, to signify his  
“ body and blood offered in sacrifice.....It is plain, both  
“ from the design and nature of the Lord’s Supper, and  
“ from the concurrent testimony of most of the primi-  
“ tive Fathers who conversed with the Apostles or their  
“ disciples,” (see the examples quoted, in which the  
Sacrament is called *an oblation, a sacrifice, and a gift,*)  
“ that it was reckoned throughout the whole world to  
“ be a commemorative sacrifice, or the memorial of our  
“ Lord offered on the cross.....But it is not to be  
“ wondered, that those of the Reformed religion have  
“ either wholly abstained from the names of *sacrifice* or  
“ *oblation*, or mention them with caution and reserve in  
“ explaining this Sacrament, which were used by the  
“ Fathers in a very true and pious sense, since they have  
“ been so grossly abused by the Papists.” *Archbishop*  
*Potter on Church Government*, p. 241—248.

Hooker remarks, that “ the Fathers of the Christian  
“ Church with security of speech call usually the min-  
“ istry of the Gospel *priesthood*, in regard of that  
“ which the Gospel hath proportionable to ancient sa-  
“ crifices; namely, the communion of the blessed body  
“ and blood of Christ, although it hath properly now  
“ no sacrifice.” *Ecclesiastical Polity*, book v. c. 78. vol.  
ii. p. 436.



dinance of Christ supposes the agency of his appointed minister. Who can sufficiently lament the deplorable infatuation, which, while it rejects the one, still vainly flatters itself with the full possession of the blessings and privileges annexed to the due performance of the other?

II. But supposing the divine commission of the Christian ministry as important as it has been here contended that it is, how, it has been asked, can we be assured of its continued existence? and whatever may be allowed of our blessed Saviour, of his inspired Apostles, and their gifted companions—of those who were immediately and visibly called by the Holy Ghost, and gave proofs of it by signs and wonders—how can we now, with any confidence, advance a similar claim for mere ordinary mortals, and that, too, so many ages after the final cessation of all sensible traces of the miraculous effusions of the Holy Spirit?

Had the Scriptures left us without information on this point, the difficulty would no doubt have been insurmountable by



human ingenuity. But whilst nothing is more evident from the sacred volume, than that the qualifications for the sacred ministration are the gifts of the Holy Spirit, it is equally clear that the gifts of the Spirit are effectually conferred by the imposition of hands. Thus St. Paul exhorts the elders of Ephesus to “take heed to the “flock over which the Holy Ghost had “made them overseers<sup>a</sup>;” and that, not by any visible and immediate commission; but by apostolical ordination. Thus again he reminds Timothy to “stir up the gift “of God which is in him by the putting “on of his hands<sup>b</sup>;” and as the powers conferred on Timothy included a capacity for conveying the spiritual commission to others also, he farther exhorts him to “lay hands suddenly on no man<sup>c</sup>.” If the posterity of Aaron, though without any immediate call, yet by adhering to the mode of succession appointed by God, were as truly priests as even Aaron himself, how can we consistently refuse the obvious

<sup>a</sup> Acts xx. 28.

<sup>b</sup> 2 Tim. i. 6.

<sup>c</sup> 1 Tim. v. 22.



application of a similar principle to the successors of the Apostles? Where is the arrogance, where is even the difficulty in believing, that those who at this very day succeed to them by regular ordination, are, if not as extensively, yet as really, and for every ordinary purpose of the Christian ministry as essentially, commissioned by the Holy Ghost, as even the Apostles themselves<sup>d</sup>?

*d* "If no man under the Jewish economy could take this honour unto himself unless he were immediately called of God, as Aaron was, then the successors of Aaron could not take this honour to themselves, because they were not immediately called of God, as Aaron was. But it is evident that the Jews had all along acknowledged the priesthood of the sons and successors of Aaron, who had not an immediate call, but succeeded according to the rule first instituted by God; and at the same time that the Apostle argued with them, this succession was what they adhered to in opposition to the priesthood of Christ. And since the Apostle's reasoning supposes they adhered to it in consequence of this principle, this principle was argued from by him as including succession, as well as immediate call." *Rogers's Review of his Discourse of the Visible and Invisible Church*, p. 157, 158.

Our own Church, in perfect accord with the sense of Scripture and primitive antiquity, uses this form of ordination; "The Bishop laying his hands on the per-



This doctrine will of course be objected to by those who have adopted an enthusiastic notion of that inward call which they deem requisite to the due discharge of the ministerial functions, and of those sensible evidences of its existence in particular individuals, of which the language of Scripture no where warrants the expectation. He whose presumptuous imagination can mistake the fervour of his own ill-regulated feelings for the inspiration of Heaven, or whose blind credulity can recognize the operations of the Spirit, in the arrogant claims or imposing eloquence of some gifted preacher, naturally views with contempt every pretence of conferring grace by outward forms.

Almighty God, in order to secure us from such unhappy delusions, has been pleased to affix some outward sign to all his inward gifts, as the sure, and in fact the only convincing pledge of their reality. Thus the Gospel offers no hope

“son’s head, saith, ‘Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Priest in the Church of God, committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands.’”



of regeneration but by the sacrament of Baptism, and allows of no qualification for the ministry unaccompanied by the imposition of hands. Were the case otherwise; were we permitted to separate the inward call from the outward; could we even in a single instance be justified in depending on the apparent gifts and graces of an eloquent teacher, as superseding the necessity of his regular ordination; every criterion, by which we could distinguish the genuine minister of Christ from the vain pretender to the sacred office, would be at once destroyed. The most plausible pretensions to the inward call of the Holy Ghost might be made, even where in reality it least existed. What could remain to secure the people from delusion? what could exempt the enthusiast himself? The “blind would ‘lead the blind;’” even the appointed means of grace would become precarious; the table of the Lord could no longer be approached in the full assurance of faith.

Closely allied to this error, is that of those who regard the personal holiness of the ministers of the Gospel as necessary to



the validity of their administrations. But, "it should be remembered," says an excellent writer on this subject, "that there is an holiness of office, independent of the holiness of the minister; the former being essential to the validity of the ministerial act, is on that account not to be dispensed with, whilst the latter only recommends and adorns it. That these two qualifications should always meet together, is a circumstance most devoutly to be wished; but as, through the infirmity of human nature, this will not always be the case, it ought to become an object of primary concern with us in our judgment upon this point, that the greater consideration be at no time sacrificed to the lesser one."<sup>e</sup>

Did the wickedness of the Jewish priests under the Law render it necessary for the people to make their offerings by other hands? Can we believe, that when Judas was sent forth with the rest of the twelve, it was the misfortune of all those who

<sup>e</sup> Daubeny's Guide to the Church, vol. i. p. 71, 72.



chanced to receive baptism from him, to lose the benefits annexed to the sacred ministration? If our Saviour commanded the Jews to observe the directions even of the Scribes and Pharisees, because they “sat in Moses’ seat<sup>f</sup>;” if the Apostles declared themselves “men of like passions<sup>g</sup> “with” the rest of mankind, without thereby disclaiming even the smallest portion of their spiritual authority; if St. Paul plainly insinuated that a man may preach effectually to others, and yet be himself “a cast-away<sup>h</sup>;” let us beware of attaching an unwarrantable importance to the personal sanctity of the ministers of religion, as if through “their power or their holiness” God’s blessings were to be conferred. If this supposition were really correct; if the good seed could be injured by the hand that sowed it; if the pure word of Gospel truth could be corrupted by the mouth that uttered it; if the holy sacraments could lose their efficacy as the means of grace, through the unworthiness of him who administered

<sup>f</sup> Matt. xxiii. 2.

<sup>g</sup> Acts xiv. 15.

<sup>h</sup> I Cor. ix. 27.



them; who could secure us from disappointment and delusion? The accomplished hypocrite might defraud us of the bread of life<sup>i</sup>.

God's greatness is often most effectually magnified by the weakness of his instruments. And that we may not be induced to glory in men, and learn to think of men above what is written; that the eye of faith may be guided to its proper object, and that the divine agency may not be overlooked in the thoughtless admiration of its humble minister, "the foolish things of 'the world'" seem on many occasions to have been purposely chosen "to confound "the wise<sup>k</sup>"; and we have this inestimable "treasure" of the Gospel "in earthen "vessels, that the excellency of the power "may be of God, and not of us!"

But by the less enthusiastic, and more numerous portion of objectors, by those who are disposed either to deny entirely,

<sup>i</sup> See Article XXVI. "Of the unworthiness of the Ministers, which hinders not the effect of the Sacra-ments."

<sup>k</sup> 1 Cor. i. 27.

<sup>l</sup> 2 Cor. iv. 7.



or to reduce to comparative insignificance, the claims of ecclesiastical authority, it has been contended, that the powers thus asserted for the Christian priesthood are of a nature so extravagant, as to place the laity altogether at their mercy; to interfere in some measure with the prerogative of God himself, and to encourage in the clergy a degree of spiritual pride altogether inconsistent with the religion of the lowly Jesus. If indeed an absolute and unconditional authority were claimed by them, the objection might have weight. But assuredly so despotic a control is neither pretended nor imagined. Was it ever conceived that none could be saved but those whom the clergy might think fit to absolve? that the capricious or mistaken refusal of the sacramental rites could injure him who was thus unjustly excluded? Are we to believe that Abimelech would have continued in affliction, if Abraham had withheld his intercession<sup>m</sup>?

<sup>m</sup> See Law's Second Letter; Scholar Armed, vol. i. p. 315, 316.



But on the other hand, because ecclesiastical authority is not thus absolute, because those who possess it may abuse their trust, because it is committed to them on implied conditions, the violation of which might at once invalidate their outward act, is it therefore necessary to deny their sober and scriptural claims to the ordinary administration of the means of grace? We do not argue thus on other occasions.—We do not deny the existence of parental or sovereign authority, though both the one and the other have their limits, and both are liable to abuse in the exercise of them.

From the same considerations it must be evident, that the prerogative of the Almighty is not invaded by the ministerial office. But besides, as the ingenious Law contends, “is the prerogative of God “injured because his own institutions are “obeyed? Cannot he dispense his graces “by what persons and on what terms he “pleases? Is he deprived of the disposal “of his blessings, because they are be-“stowed on persons according to his or-“der, and in obedience to his authority?



“.....Cannot God institute means of grace,  
“ but these means must be above himself?  
“ They owe all their power and efficacy to  
“ his institution ; and can operate no fur-  
“ ther than the ends for which he instituted  
“ them. How then is he dethroned for be-  
“ ing thus obeyed ”?

It is not the least among the trials of the clergy at the present day, that they cannot assert their exclusive claims to the exercise of the Christian ministry, and vindicate the honour of their divine commission, without being thought to seek their own glory, and incurring the charge of arrogance and spiritual pride. What charge however could have less foundation in truth and reason? Can those be fairly chargeable with arrogance, who regard themselves but as humble instruments in the hands of God, acting by his sole appointment, possessing no efficacy in the communication of grace and pardon, from any personal qualification of their own, and none whatever but so long as they act in conformity to his sovereign

<sup>n</sup> Law's Second Letter, &c.; Scholar Armed, vol. i.  
p. 330.



will? Can they derive any encouragement to spiritual pride, from the recollection, that, if they perform their office according to the intention of him who appointed it, the benefit accrues, not to themselves, but to others; but that, if they neglect or abuse it, themselves and none else incur the guilt and punishment?

But if they are nevertheless convinced by the sure word of God himself, that they bear his sacred commission, must they be deemed arrogant for having the courage to avow it? Is the ambassador censured as presumptuous for declaring the errand on which he is sent? There is a “woe” denounced against them, if they “preach not “the Gospel”;” will they be exempted from that woe, if, through an unworthy compliance with the humour of their profane contemporaries, they suppress all mention of their divine commission, and leave their people inadequately impressed<sup>o</sup> with

<sup>o</sup> 1 Cor. ix. 16.

<sup>p</sup> “As long as the people are taught the true nature “of the Christian ministry, to be as really it is, a true “and proper priesthood, and that their ministers are



the importance of those sacred ministrations, by which grace and pardon are to be conveyed to their souls, the souls for which themselves are appointed to

“ true and proper priests, ordained by God to stand before him as advocates for them, and before them for him, as his oracles to bless them in his name ; so long they will honour and reverence them as priests. But when they are pleased to strip themselves of that character, and relation to God, to which these powers belong, and which above any other makes their ministry, and them as Church ministers, venerable and holy, then they will soon find the veneration of the people begin to decay, and by degrees wear off into utter contempt.”

*Hickes on the Christian Priesthood*, p. 130, 131.

“ The great crime and folly of the Methodists consist, not so much in heterodoxy as in fanaticism ; not in perverse doctrine, but rather in a disorderly zeal for the propagation of truth ; which is the pretence for that irregular ministry which is exercised by their teachers, encouraged by the leaders of the sect, and greedily followed by the people. The immediate remedy for this evil, and indeed the best security against the seductions of false teachers of all denominations, would be, that our laity should be frequently taught with what hazard to himself the private Christian officiously meddles in the preacher’s office ; how strictly it is required of him to submit himself to those teachers, who are by due authority set over the people to watch over their souls.” *Bishop Horsley’s Charge to the Clergy of the Diocese of St. David’s, at his primary Visitation in 1790.*



"watch," the souls of which themselves  
"must give account."<sup>q</sup>

"When the Son of man cometh, shall he  
"find faith on the earth?" Many have not  
scrupled to declare their conviction of the  
near and awful approach of those last  
days of predicted apostasy, from the ge-  
neral want of faith now observable among  
men;—not a general disbelief of revealed  
truth, or of the divine mission of the Sa-  
viour of the world, but a want of faith in  
the practical efficacy of those means of  
grace, which God has been graciously  
pleased to render instrumental to our sal-  
vation; a want of faith similar to that which  
led Naaman to reject with scorn the hopes  
of a cure from the waters of Jordan<sup>r</sup>, and  
which, if he had retained it, would have left  
him cureless.—This is that spirit of unbe-  
lief which all the faithful promises of the  
God of truth himself cannot prevail on,  
even in his own positive institutions, to  
look for effects to which the means ostens-  
ibly employed are in their own nature in-  
adequate;—which cannot raise its thoughts

<sup>q</sup> Heb. xiii. 17.   <sup>r</sup> Luke xviii. 8.   <sup>s</sup> 2 Kings v. 12.



from the weak and insignificant instrument to the omnipotent hand which guides it;—which cannot believe that mere water can be rendered truly effectual to the mystical washing away of sin, or that the elements of bread and wine can in reality become the efficacious means of grace;—above all, perhaps, which cannot comprehend the essential difference between the ministrations of different men, or that the ministry of any man whatever can be of avail to the salvation of his fellow-creatures;—which will not, in short, “receive the kingdom of ‘God as a little child,’ and therefore cannot ‘enter therein’.”

<sup>t</sup> Luke xviii. 17.—“By the Church and its ordinances every Christian is put to the same trial,” (as that of Naaman;) “whether he will submit to such things as reason cannot account for; whether he will look for an effect to which the cause is not adequate without the interposition of an invisible power. The children of God are still exercised by this trial. Some accept the terms proposed; they believe the promises of God, and are saved. Of the rest, some do not see how they can be saved in this manner; and others spend their lives in vanity, and never think whether they can or cannot.” *Essay on the Church; Scholar Armed*, vol. ii. p. 27. Bishop Hoadly must be considered to have given a most dangerous sanction to this



Against the notorious and alarming increase of a species of scepticism thus hazardous to the souls of men, so closely bordering on positive infidelity, and at the same time so destructive of the peace and harmony of the Church of Christ, now, surely, if ever, the most zealous vigilance and most strenuous exertions of the Christian pastor are preeminently demanded. For while men labour under prejudices which render them alike insensible to the advantages attendant on ecclesiastical communion, and to the evils incurred by separation, who shall venture to indulge the cheering hope of discovering an effectual remedy for those unhappy dissensions, by which our Church is rent, and her very existence endangered?

And if it be true, as there is in fact but too much reason to apprehend, that the ignorance of the laity on these subjects has in some degree arisen from the silence of

description of scepticism, when he thus expressed his sentiments; “Human benedictions, human absolutions, “human denunciations, human excommunications, have “nothing to do with the favour or anger of God.” *Preservative against Nonjurors*, p. 101.



the Clergy themselves, be it ours to strive, if it yet be possible, to redeem that error, to repair, if it be yet possible, that fatal neglect. Be it ours, as faithful “stewards of the “mysteries of God<sup>u</sup>,” in conveying to them truths, unfortunately<sup>v</sup> as unpopular as they are important, to persevere through “evil “report and good report<sup>x</sup>,” “whether they “will hear, or whether they will forbear<sup>y</sup>,” that so we may at least be spared the pain of being self-condemned, may at least be enabled to address them with the holy confidence of the Apostle, “We take you to “record this day, that we are pure from “the blood of all men. We have not “shunned<sup>z</sup> to declare unto you the whole “counsel of God<sup>z</sup>. ”

<sup>u</sup> 1 Cor. iv. 1.

<sup>x</sup> 2 Cor. vi. 8.

<sup>v</sup> Ezekiel ii. 5.

<sup>z</sup> Acts xx. 26, 27.



## SERMON VI.

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1 COR. xiv. 40.

*Let all things be done decently and in order.*

IT has been already observed in the preceding Lectures, and must, it is conceived, be sufficiently obvious, that, besides those positive institutions of Christ himself, which may justly be regarded as essential to the existence of a genuine branch of his universal Church, a variety of regulations, relating to the unity and good order of a Christian society, must be confided to human discretion. Under the present constitution of human nature, an exact uniformity of opinion amongst numerous individuals on points of this, or indeed of almost any description, is notoriously impossible; and the peaceful surrender of private judgment to the decisions of legitimate authority can alone secure uniformity of practice.

That a general concession, so necessary



to the harmony of the Church, should be attended with any serious difficulty, was the less to have been expected, when it was recollect ed, that the particulars, in which obedience is thus required, being in themselves matters of indifference, and such, moreover, as the Almighty had neither limited by definite precept, nor declared unlawful by strict prohibition, may be almost infinitely varied, without giving reasonable cause of offence to the nicest conscience; —whilst, on the other hand, when once they have received the sanction of regular authority, of those “ who have the rule” in the Church, and to whom men are expressly enjoined to “ obey and submit<sup>a</sup>” themselves, wilfully to neglect them is contempt and disobedience, and to form a distinct communion on such grounds, a positive and criminal schism.

Unhappily, however, for the peace of our Church, multitudes have never been wanting, from the Reformation to the present day, who have shown themselves insensible to such obvious reasoning; and

<sup>a</sup> Heb. xiii. 17.



rather than sacrifice any portion of their private judgment to the public peace, have ventured on the fearful alternative of wilful separation. And I apprehend that it must be allowed, that, in the great majority of cases, they have thus separated, not because they conscientiously differed in opinion on any of the grand essentials of Christianity, but for the sake of some minor points, which nothing but pride or prejudice could have raised to such undue consideration;—which might have been decided either in the way which they preferred, or in that which they rejected, without material detriment to faith or practice, and with respect to which the only question that really deserved their attention was, not so much what had been commanded, as by whom the command had been given.

It must, however, be admitted, that it is far from wonderful, that such prejudices should have arisen against the externals of religion in the minds of those who had recently effected their emancipation from a Church where they had been so grossly abused. Forms and ceremonies were no



unnatural objects of jealousy and antipathy to those who had just learnt to view with disgust the senseless and unprofitable formalities of Popish worship, and the childish and superstitious, not to say idolatrous, pageantry of Popish rites. Wherever zeal exceeded discretion, and that it would do so in numerous instances we cannot doubt, men shrank with horror from every imagined vestige of the corruption from which they had so happily escaped; and it need not surprise us, if they were too ready to sweep away in the same promiscuous mass, much that was not only unobjectionable, but really useful and edifying in the celebration of religious worship.

What is far more calculated to excite our astonishment is, that similar prejudices should still continue to exist against the Service of our Church; that even centuries after the peaceable establishment of the doctrines of the Reformation, when the ferment naturally attendant on a contest of such magnitude has long since subsided; when we are no longer agitated like our forefathers by the



terrors of reviving Popery, and are enabled dispassionately to allow, that all is not false nor all abominable even in Rome herself, rites and forms whose sole offence it seems originally to have been, that they were unjustly deemed the relics of a hateful superstition, should still have to contend with objection and cavil.

The fact, however, appears to be, that the Dissenters of the present day, having received by inheritance those modes of worship which their ancestors adopted as a substitute for the rejected forms of our Church, together with those arguments against the superstition of external service which were at the same time devised, feel both for the one and the other that species of attachment which such circumstances render natural;—that they have retained, with still more deliberate preference, the disposition ever manifested by their predecessors, to deny the existence of that ecclesiastical authority, which claims to regulate the practice of men on some points originally indifferent;—that those who in more modern times, on



the same or on any other principles, have joined the standard of non-conformity, have naturally adopted arguments so well calculated to afford a plausible support to their cause, and those modes of worship, which might best illustrate the distinction between themselves and the communion which they had ventured to desert ;—so that, although the genuine antipapistical horror of rites and ceremonies may be considered as in a great measure extinct, its effects continue to survive, in inveterate and unreasonable prejudices against the pure forms and unostentatious observances of our excellent Church.

My present object is to point out briefly the necessity of some degree of external form towards maintaining the internal spirit of religion among men ;—to prove the authority of the Church, in appointing such regulations as she deems to be conducive to the decent and profitable celebration of religious worship, and the duty of general submission to that authority, so long as it is exercised within its due limits, and violates no principles of superior obligation ;—and



to shew, not only the strict lawfulness of the course pursued by our own Church in these particulars thus left to her discretion, but the positive and important benefits resulting from her decent and edifying forms, and more especially from her admirable Liturgy, in comparison with the supposed advantages of the very opposite mode which has been adopted by her adversaries.

I. "Man," says an excellent writer, "is  
"a being compounded of soul and body;  
"his religion therefore must be suited to  
"his circumstances. That must have a  
"soul and a body, a spiritual and a cor-  
"poral part; upon the proper union of  
"which two parts the spiritual life of its  
"possessor will upon experience be found  
"to depend. For certain it is, that reli-  
"gion may be too refined for the present  
"gross state of the human understanding,  
"which must receive much of its informa-  
"tion on divine subjects through a sensible  
"medium."<sup>a</sup>

The outward forms of religion are, no

<sup>a</sup> Daubeny's Guide to the Church, vol. i. page 246.  
second edition.



doubt, liable to the most pernicious abuse, and have frequently been carried to such an immoderate extent, as to have appeared in the eyes of the unreflecting to comprehend the whole of their duty, and to supersede the necessity of that inward piety, which they were merely designed to accompany and support. But to consider this circumstance as an argument for their total abolition, is to evince a thorough ignorance of human nature, and to controvert, not only the experience and testimony of every preceding age, but even the decision of the Almighty himself, as manifested in every known dispensation of his revealed will ;—it is an argument, in short, which could scarcely be adopted in its full extent but by the utmost blindness of fanaticism, or the most violent prejudices of religious contention<sup>b</sup>.

<sup>b</sup> “ Forms, considered merely in themselves, are but  
“ the outside of religion ; and if they lead to nothing  
“ beyond that, it matters not in what place they are  
“ practised, or by whom. Thus far all rational men  
“ readily agree. Their disagreement consists in this :—  
“ some men reject forms, from a remembrance of their  
“ past abuse ; whilst others more wisely determine, that



If men were no longer reminded of their spiritual concerns, by the outward circumstances of time and place;—if the sabbath were no longer peculiarly appropriated to their religious duties;—if the house of God were no longer expressly dedicated to his honour and service;—would they as constantly and certainly find their temple in the fields or in the closet, and their religion in the unassisted suggestions of their private thoughts? —or if the posture which we consider so expressive of humility and reverence were exploded as vain and superstitious, would those devout affections as readily assimilate

“ the advantage they are calculated to produce, ought  
“ not to be sacrificed to the evil, which, through the  
“ corruption of human nature, may occasionally be de-  
“ rived from them. And this determination is certainly  
“ best suited to the state of the party concerned.....  
“ The Jewish religion, that particular dispensation of  
“ God, abounded in them; from which our Saviour se-  
“ lected those which were adapted to the Christian in-  
“ stitution.....And he who persuades himself that  
“ religion is to be preserved in the world without forms,  
“ makes himself wiser than God;—at the same time  
“ that he manifests his ignorance of the nature and cha-  
“ racter of man.” *Ibid.* p. 246—249.



with any other, which caprice or chance might dictate? Assuredly, though the face and form of religious worship are not its life and spirit;—though they may sometimes be found to exist independently of them, or even to prevail to their destruction; yet in their sober and legitimate use, they are admirably adapted to cherish de-

c " In every grand or main public duty which God requireth at the hands of his Church, there is, besides that matter and form wherein the essence thereof consisteth, a certain outward fashion whereby the same is in decent sort administered. The substance of all religious actions is delivered from God himself in few words. For example sake, in the sacraments....  
" ....But the due and decent form of administering those holy sacraments doth require a great deal more. The end which is aimed at in setting down the outward form of all religious actions, is the edification of the Church. Now men are edified, when either their understanding is taught somewhat whereof, in such actions, it behoveth all men to consider, or when their hearts are moved with any affection suitable thereunto; when their minds are in any sort stirred up unto that reverence, devotion, attention, and due regard, which in those cases seemeth requisite. Therefore unto this purpose not only speech, but sundry sensible means besides, have always been thought necessary, and especially those means which being object to the eye, the liveliest and the most apprehensive sense of all other,



votion in ourselves, and render our example an encouragement to it in others. He who should succeed in persuading mankind to lay aside all the externals of religion, and rely on an abstract and contemplative piety for securing the favour of their Maker, would eventually banish from the world religion herself;—the “power of godliness” would not long survive the extinction of its “form.”

II. That the Church has been invested with authority to appoint regulations for the due performance of public worship, and the orderly conduct of her members in all that relates to their religion, is no more than evidently follows from allowing her to be a society at all. For a power analogous to this is no more than every society, whether civil or religious, claims and exercises for its own preservation<sup>a</sup>.

But the Scriptures will enable us to prove this still more decisively in the case

“have in that respect seemed the fittest to make a deep and strong impression.” *Hooker’s Ecclesiastical Polity*, book iv. ch. 1. octavo edit. vol. i. p. 433, 434.

<sup>a</sup> See Archbishop Potter on Church Government, p. 285.



before us. Though they seldom lay down any thing more than mere general rules on these points, and do not perhaps in a single instance precisely define the mode of Christian worship, yet do they make it perfectly evident that the practice of the Church could not have been thus indefinite. If Christians were enjoined to assemble "themselves together for divine worship, the time and the place of assembling must of necessity have been subject to appointment;—if "all things" were to be "done unto edifying," and "every thing" to be "done "decently and in order," those precise regulations must have been adopted and enforced, by which alone order could be maintained, and edification promoted. If the converts in general were commanded to "obey those who had the rule over "them, and submit themselves<sup>h</sup>," to what could such submission refer, but to the regulations adopted for the peace and welfare of the Church by its appointed rulers? In all the leading duties of religion

e Heb. x. 25.

g 1 Cor. xiv. 40.

f 1 Cor. xiv. 26.

h Heb. xiii. 17.



and morality, as our obedience is due to God alone, so it is God alone whom we can be even said to obey;—if man is obeyed, it must be in those minor enactments, which, however necessary to the regularity of a Christian society, yet being liable to vary with times and circumstances, and being at the same time perfectly within the scope of human capacity, are restrained but by the general laws of Scripture, and are left in their detail to human discretion alone.

If it be objected, that the extraordinary assistance of the Holy Spirit gave to the inspired Apostles, and their gifted followers, an authority on these points which their successors cannot claim, it is well deserving of notice, that St. Paul himself authoritatively delivered some rules which he expressly admits were not the suggestions of the Spirit; “To the rest,” says he, “speak **‘I, not the Lord!**” “In prescribing **‘these orders,**” says a distinguished ornament of our Church, “it must be allowed **‘that he acted only in virtue of his gene-**

<sup>i</sup> 1 Cor. vii. 12.



“ ral commission, as a ruler of Christ’s  
“ Church, by which he was authorized to  
“ make any such laws as he saw conve-  
“ nient, provided they were not contrary  
“ to the laws of Christ. So that it is plain  
“ the Apostles prescribed rules for which  
“ they had not the express direction of the  
“ Spirit; and since the ordinary governors  
“ of the Church are not denied to have as  
“ much authority as the Apostles in all  
“ things in which they were not inspired,  
“ or which did not relate to their mission  
“ to convert the world, their precedent  
“ must in these instances be acknowledged  
“ conclusive for this power in the ordinary  
“ ministry<sup>k</sup>.” It seems indeed to be little

<sup>k</sup> Rogers on the Visible and Invisible Church, 4th edit. p. 49. “ But, secondly,” he adds, “ the instances are numerous in Scripture in which this authority was exercised by persons who were not Apostles. In the council of Jerusalem, not only the *Apostles*, but the *Elders* concurred in the derees of that assembly, (Acts xv. 6, 23.) St. Paul sends a general direction to the Church at Corinth, *Let all things be done decently and in order*, (1 Cor. xiv. 40.) but the prescribing such particular rules as should be necessary to that end he leaves to the superiors of that Church. And so he informs Titus, that it was a part of his commission in Crete, to *set in order the things that*



less than self-evident, that, the more general and indeterminate the language of Scripture is in laying down rules of this description, the more necessary, and by consequence the less disputable, must be the authority of the Church to define and enforce them for herself<sup>1</sup>.

“ were wanting, (Tit. i. 5.) which must imply an authority to make such rules as he in his discretion should think conducive to that order which was wanting..... “ Consequently the ordinary governors of the Church have sufficient ground from Scripture for the right they claim to prescribe such rules.” *Ibid.*

1 “ For instance, the times and places where Christians assemble together to worship God must be fixed, otherwise they cannot assemble at all. When they are come together, it must be determined in what order the several offices of religion shall be performed; whether praying, or preaching, or singing of psalms, or administering of the sacraments, shall be first; otherwise one will be for praying, whilst another is for preaching, and a third for some other office, and nothing but disorder and confusion will be seen in the Church. On the same account the division of Christians into districts and parishes, for the more convenient assembling together, and keeping up of order and discipline, is a thing which must be varied..... So that the things of this kind having been left undetermined by the Scriptures, and also it being necessary they should be determined, it follows that Christ has left the Church authority to determine them.”

*Archbishop Potter on Church Government*, p. 284, 285.



A reference to the circumstances of the Mosaic dispensation is strikingly illustrative of this truth. If ever there was a people, whose rites were so strictly and minutely prescribed, as apparently to make variation unlawful, and addition unnecessary, that people were the children of Israel. Nevertheless, at the period of our Saviour's ministry, we find many practices established, for which the books of Moses or their Prophets contained no directions whatever. Amongst a variety of instances which might be named,—much of the service of the temple,—every thing connected with the worship of the synagogue,—and the feast of the dedication, were all of them introductions of a comparatively recent date; yet our blessed Lord, so far from deeming them on that account unlawful, or the authority which had appointed them incompetent, vouchsafed to sanction them by his own divine presence<sup>m</sup>. If a religion then, thus restricted in its rites, confined to one

<sup>m</sup> See Archbishop Potter on Church Government, p. 286. and Bishop Grove, Persuasive to Communion, London Cases, p. 6.



small nation, and, in its leading observances, even to one single place, admitted of such supplementary enactments, shall we claim less for the more enlarged and comprehensive system of the Gospel of Christ, which is destined hereafter, by the divine blessing, to extend itself amidst every variety of climate and national character, till "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea"?"

In fact, the principle which some have affected to maintain, that nothing is lawful in the service of a Church, for which an express precept cannot be found in holy writ, when considered in connexion with the almost total absence of express precept on the subject, contains in it such a palpable absurdity, as to require no formal confutation. Those who adopt it indeed must unavoidably condemn every Church that has existed or could exist on earth, and sentence themselves, for consistency's sake, to perpetual separation from every even the smallest society of their fellow Christians.

<sup>n</sup> Isaiah xi. 9.



ans, who could not remain in communion with each other, without at least some rules which the Scriptures are unable to supply<sup>o</sup>. Of this then we may account ourselves certain, that, however a man may be tempted to assert such a principle, in his eagerness to impugn the practice of others, he would be little disposed to abide by it, when reduced to the defence of his own.

“ If the *imposition* of some indifferent things be “ thought a sufficient ground for a *separation*, (as it is “ now generally urged, since the proof of their unlaw- “ fulness is despaired of,) then we must have separated “ from the apostolical Churches, who had some such “ usages as the holy kiss, and others, whose indifferency “ is acknowledged by their being wholly disused;—we “ must have *separated* from the first Churches that suc- “ ceeded them, which had all some indifferent things “ enjoined;—we must *separate*, at this time, from all “ the Reformed Churches in the world; for there is “ none of these which does not require the use of such “ things as we should judge to be cause enough to de- “ part from them;—nay, when we have once *separated* “ from the Church of England upon this account, we “ must then *separate* from one another, and every man “ must be a Church by himself. For it is impossible “ that any society, whether merely human, or Christian, “ should subsist without the orderly determination of “ some indifferent things.” *Bishop Grove, Persuasive to Communion; London Cases*, p. 15.



Let it not, however, be imagined, that any unconditional authority is thus claimed for the Church, or any authority at all which extends beyond those indifferent matters which affect not the grand essentials of morality and religion. It has been correctly, though somewhat quaintly remarked, that “there are three sorts of “things about which the Church is con-“versant, good, bad, and indifferent;—“the good oblige by their own nature; the “bad cannot be enforced by any authority; “therefore the authority of the Church “must extend to things indifferent; that is, “to order and discipline, to circumstances “of time, place, forms of worship, cere-“monies, and such like;—and to disobey “because they are indifferent, is to deny “that God has given power to his Church to “regulate any one thing whatsoever.” Un-

p Essay on the Church; Scholar Armed, vol. ii. p. 25.  
third edit.

“We teach, that whatsoever is unto salvation termed “necessary by way of excellency; whatsoever it standeth “all men upon to know or to do that they may be “saved; whatsoever there is whereof it may truly be “said, *This not to believe, is eternal death and damnation.*



less a Church then can be clearly shewn to have transgressed her appointed limits;—if her forms and observances betray no traces of idolatry or superstition, if they violate no doctrine or precept of God's written word, nor deviate from the natural and received principles of decency and order, her members are indisputably bound to submit to her authority, to sacrifice all the unavoidable discrepancies of private judgment, and

“*tion; or, This every soul that will live, must duly ob-*  
“*serve: of which sort the articles of Christian faith,*  
“*and the sacraments of the Church of Christ are; all*  
“*such things, if Scripture did not comprehend, the*  
“*Church of God should not be able to measure out the*  
“*length and the breadth of that way wherein for ever*  
“*she is to walk; heretics and schismatics never ceasing,*  
“*some to abridge, some to enlarge, all to pervert and*  
“*obscure the same. But as for those things that are ac-*  
“*cessory hereunto, those things that so belong to the way*  
“*of salvation, as to alter them, is no otherwise to change*  
“*that way, than a path is changed by altering only the*  
“*uppermost face thereof; which be it laid with gravel,*  
“*or set with grass, or paved with stones, remaineth*  
“*still the same path; in such things, because discretion*  
“*may teach the Church what is convenient, we hold not*  
“*the Church further tied herein unto Scripture, than*  
“*that against Scripture nothing be admitted in the*  
“*Church.” Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, book iii. c. 3.*  
vol. i. p. 366.



“ follow after the things which make for  
“ peace.”

On these grounds the opinion of Augustine is both excellent itself, and worthy of universal adoption; “ that in all things not contrary to truth and good manners, it becometh a good and prudent Christian to practise according to the custom of the Church where he happens to be, if he will not be a scandal to them, nor have them to be a scandal to him.”

“ Where no law is, there is no transgression.” Where God has not forbidden, our lawful superiors may assuredly command; and obedience on our part is not only an allowable course of perfect safety, but the indispensable course of

<sup>q</sup> Rom. xiv. 19.

<sup>r</sup> Nec disciplina ulla est in his melior gravi prudentiisque Christiano, quam ut eo modo agat, quo agere viderit Ecclesiam, ad quancunque forte devenerit. Quod enim neque contra fidem, neque contra bonos mores injungitur, indifferenter est habendum, et pro corum inter quos vivitur societate servandum est.....Ad quam forte Ecclesiam veneris, ejus mores serva, si cuiquam non vis esse scando, nec quemquam tibi.” *Augustin. Epist. 118.* edit. Lovaniens.

<sup>s</sup> Rom. iv. 15.



bounden duty. It would be strange indeed, if, as some should seem to imagine, the command of legitimate authority could make that unlawful, which, being subject to no prohibition, was, by consequence, lawful before<sup>t</sup>! By whatever artifices of perverted reasoning, then, a man may have imposed on his own better judgment, until at length, perhaps, he is even firmly persuaded that he withholds his obedience, in such cases, from a pure regard to the dictates of his conscience, we can scarcely be mistaken in assigning to his conduct a secret source of a far less worthy nature; in believing, in short, not that the practice enjoined is distressing to the tenderness of his conscience, but that submission to the authority which

<sup>t</sup> If all men were of this opinion, that no lawful thing  
“ought to be complied with, when it is commanded,  
“authority might as effectually oblige them to do what-  
“soever it would have, by commanding the quite con-  
“trary, as it can now by commanding the thing it  
“would have.....And if in lawful things authority can  
“oblige us to comply with this, by commanding the  
“contrary, our liberty will be altogether as liable to re-  
“straint this way, as the other.” *Dr. Scott on the Use of  
Forms of Prayer*, part 2. *London Cases*, p. 281.



enjoins it, is offensive to the unruliness of his pride.

III. In proof of the strict lawfulness of the course pursued by our Church in those particulars which have been left to her discretion, it can only be necessary to advert to the leading points in which her conduct has been usually arraigned. These appear to have been a few, and but a very few, ceremonies, and more particularly the appointment of the forms of prayer which compose our excellent Liturgy.

“A man that were unacquainted with “the true state of our case,” said Bishop Grove, “that should stand by, and only “hear the bitter cries and invectives that “have been made against ceremonies, “would be ready to imagine, that sure our “Church was nothing else almost but ce- “remonies. But he would be mightily sur- “prised, when upon inquiry he should “find, that these ceremonies, which had “occasioned all this noise, should be no “more than three;—the surplice, the cross “after baptism, and kneeling at the Sacra- “ment. He would be amazed to think that



“ these should be the things about which  
“ so many massy books had been written,  
“ so great discords and animosities raised;  
“ such a flourishing Church once quite de-  
“ stroyed, and now most miserably divided,  
“ after it had been so happily restored;  
“ and his wonder must be increased, when  
“ he should perceive that of these three,  
“ there was but one, and no more, in which  
“ the people were any way concerned.  
“ The cross and surplice are to be used  
“ only by the minister, and if his con-  
“ science be satisfied, no man’s else need be  
“ disturbed about them.”

I am the less disposed, however, to enter into any formal defence of usages apparently so little liable to objection, believing, as I do, that at this day they could scarcely have found objectors, had not the customary cavils against them, and their abandonment in the practice of nonconformity, been inherited from times more naturally, and, in fact, more excusably jealous of every imaginable relic of Papal superstition.

<sup>a</sup> Bishop Grove, Persuasive to Communion; London Cases, p. 9, 10.



tion. I would merely remark, that the surplice is evidently calculated for the respectable decency, and not for the superfluous splendour of religious worship;—that the employment of the sign of the cross, not in the single instance of baptism only, as we have retained it, but on a variety of occasions of inferior moment, so far from being a corruption of Popery, may be traced to the earliest and purest ages of Christianity\*;—that kneeling is of all ordinary postures the most expressive of the holy affections of a devout communicant;

\* “Ad omnem progressum atque promotum, ad omnem aditum et exitum, ad calceatum, ad lavaera, ad mensas, ad lumiua, ad cubilia, ad sedilia, quaeunque nos conversatio exercet, frontem crucis signaculo terimus.” *Tertull. de Corona*, cap. iii. edit. Rigalt. p. 102. “In fronte maculatus est, ea parte corporis notatus, offenso Domino, ubi signantur, qui Dominum promerentur.” *Cyprian. de Unit. Eccles.* edit. Baluzii, p. 200. Τὸ δὲ ὅδως ἀντὶ ταφῆς, καὶ τὸ ἔλαιον ἀντὶ πνεύματος ἄγιου, ἡ σφραγὶς ἀντὶ τοῦ σταυροῦ, τὸ μύρον βασιλίσις τῆς ὁμολογίας. *Constit. Apostol.* lib. iii. c. 17.

For an account of the occasions on which the sign of the cross was used by the early Christians, and for a reference to other authorities, see Bingham's Antiquities of the Christian Church, book xi. chap. 9. and Brett's Dissertation on Ancient Liturgies, p. 34—53.



sitting, perhaps, the least so; and that, should any person be disposed to contend for an exact imitation of the posture in which the holy Supper was actually received at its original institution, his argument could avail him but little, since it has not been expressly recorded; and if it were that which conjecture and probability would lead us to conclude<sup>y</sup>, it is equally disused in the conventicle as in the church. With regard to ceremonies in general, it must at least be obvious, that the scrupulous and over anxious forbearance from practices which God has nowhere forbidden, is as strictly and essentially superstitious, as the vain hope of pleasing him by the accumulation of observances which he has nowhere commanded<sup>z</sup>.

<sup>y</sup> See Wheatly on the Common Prayer, chap. vi. sect. 23. and Bishop Grove, Persuasive to Communion, London Cases, p. 11.

<sup>z</sup> "Superstition is nothing but a groundless fancy,  
" attended sometimes with an anxious fear, and some-  
" times with a fond hope, that God is pleased or dis-  
" pleased with the bare performance or forbearance of  
" what he hath neither commanded nor forbidden. He,  
" therefore, that thinks he offends God in doing of that  
" he hath not forbidden, and he that imagines he shall



That stated forms of prayer are neither unlawful in themselves, nor unacceptable to the Almighty, we have abundant proof in the various instances of them which the books of the Old Testament contain<sup>a</sup>; from the sanction which our blessed Saviour afforded by his presence to the public service of the Jews, both in their temple and in their synagogues; and, above all, from his having himself vouchsafed to compose a form for the devotions of his followers, which, as if the more completely

“ please him by the observing of what he hath not commanded, are both in some degree, and it may be equally, superstitious.” *Bishop Grove, Persuasive to Communion, London Cases*, p. 11.

<sup>a</sup> Among these may be enumerated the form of words in which Aaron and his sons were commanded to bless the people; “The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord make his face to shine upon thee, &c.” (Numb. vi. 24—26): the words which the children of Israel were enjoined to use in the expiation of uncertain murder; “Be merciful, O Lord, unto thy people Israel, whom thou hast redeemed, and lay not innocent blood unto thy people of Israel’s charge,” (Deut. xxi. 8): and the appointment of the Psalms of David as the public forms of praise and thanksgiving by Hezekiah, (2 Chron. xxix. 30.) and again by Zerubbabel, (Ezra iii. 10, 11.)



to establish the lawfulness of forms, to mark his approbation of the previous practice, as well as to encourage it for the future, he selected, clause by clause, and almost *verbatim*, from prayers already in use amongst the Jews<sup>b</sup>.

The silence of the New Testament on the subject of any forms employed by the Apostles or their followers, is far from establishing a proof of their disuse. We might

<sup>b</sup> "It is very observable that our Lord Christ himself, when he recommended to his disciples, upon their desire, a prayer to be used by them, (that which we call the *Lord's Prayer*,) did not frame an entirely new prayer in words of his own conception, but took out of the ancient *euchologies*, or prayer-books of the Jews, what was good and laudable in them, and out of them composed that prayer. The very preface of the *Lord's Prayer*, *Our Father which art in heaven*, was the usual preface of the Jewish prayers; and all the following petitions are to be found almost in the very same words in their prayer-books. He that doubts of this, if he understands the learned languages, may be satisfied by consulting *Drusius* and *Capellus*, in their notes upon the sixth chapter of St. Matthew, the ninth and following verses. And the reflection of the learned *Grotius* upon this is very remarkable; *So far was the Lord himself of the Christian Church from all affectation of unnecessary novelty.*" *Bishop Bull's Sermons*, vol. ii. p. 556, 557. second edit.



as reasonably conclude that they laid aside the Lord's Prayer itself, or ceased to baptize in the form of words expressly prescribed by their divine Master, no subsequent mention being any where made of either.

If we proceed, however, to investigate the practice of the primitive Church, we find ample testimony in the writings of the Fathers to the early and universal use, not only of the Lord's Prayer, but of other stated forms of public devotion<sup>c</sup>. There

<sup>c</sup> "Quæ vera magis apud patrem precatio, quam quæ  
"a filio, qui est veritas, de ore prolata est?.....Oremus  
"itaque, fratres dilectissimi, sicut magister Deus do-  
"cuit.....Agnoscat pater filii sui verba, cum precem  
"facimus. Qui habitat intus in pectore, ipse sit et in  
"voce; et cum ipsum habeamus apud patrem advoca-  
"cum pro peccatis nostris, quando peccatores pro de-  
"licitis nostris petimus, advocati nostri verba proma-  
"mus." *Cyprian. de Oratione Dominica*, edit. Baluzii,  
p. 201. "Publica est nobis et communis oratio; et  
"quando oramus, non pro uno, sed pro toto populo  
"oramus, quia totus populus unum sumus." *Ibid.* p.  
206. Origen plainly represents the Christians of his  
time as using stated forms of prayer: Ταῖς προστάχθεσσις  
τε εὐχαῖς συνεχέστεροι καὶ οἰνται; νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας χρόνοι.  
*Contra Celsum*; lib. iv. edit. Spenceri. Cantab. (1677.)  
p. 302. See the historical evidence for the early use  
of set forms of prayer fully detailed in Bingham's An-  
tiquities of the Christian Church, book xiii. chap. 5.



are besides yet extant several Liturgies of very high antiquity, which, though corrupted during the intermediate ages, and having no just claim to be considered as the compositions of the Apostles whose names they bear, are probably, in their purer parts, the production of the apostolic age, and may perhaps bear some resemblance to the prayers employed by those holy men during their personal ministry<sup>d</sup>.

See also Dr. Scott on the use of Forms of Prayer, part 2. London Cases, p. 264—284; and Bishop Bull's Sermons, vol. ii. sermon 13.

<sup>d</sup> Of these the Clementine Liturgy, preserved in the Apostolical Constitutions, book viii. c. 12, is the most ancient. Though it cannot be referred to St. Clement, at least in its collective form, it is admitted to have been compiled before the Council of Nice. See Brett's Dissertation on Ancient Liturgies, p. 24, 25. It has been confidently maintained, that “if we had the very words “in which St. Peter and St. Paul consecrated the Eu-“charist, it would not differ in substance from that “which is contained in this ancient Liturgy.” Johnson's *Unbloody Sacrifice*, part 2. The Liturgy attributed to St. James is also of very high antiquity. St. Cyril, who flourished about the year 350, wrote a comment upon it. “That there are forms of worship in it as ancient “as the Apostles, seems highly probable; for, first, “there is all that form, with a very small variation from “ours, called *Sursum corda, Lift up your hearts; we lift*



They must at least be considered as affording irrefragable proof of all that my argument requires;—that the use of stated forms of prayer may be traced to the very infancy of the Church, and that no doubt of their lawfulness existed in the minds of those, who, as they had the best means of ascertaining what had been the practice and opinion of their venerated predecessors, so we may be confidently assured,

*“them up unto the Lord: it is meet and right so to do;*  
*“it is very meet, right, and our bounden duty to praise*  
*“thee, &c. Therefore with angels and archangels, &c.*  
*“all which is in St. Cyril’s comment, which is a*  
*“plain argument, that it was much ancienter than*  
*“he.” Dr. Scott; London Cases, p. 279.*      “The  
*“Liturgy of St. James is so called, not that it is be-*  
*“lieved to have been written by that Apostle, but be-*  
*“cause it was the ancient Liturgy of the Church of Je-*  
*“rusalem, of which St. James, the brother of our Lord,*  
*“was the first Bishop. And it bears his name, as being*  
*“compiled and put into writing agreeable to that tra-*  
*“ditional Liturgy, which had been used in that Church*  
*“from the time of that Apostle. So that, though he*  
*“cannot be called the writer, he may nevertheless be*  
*“reputed the author of it; the main and principal parts*  
*“being, no doubt, the same in sense, though not in*  
*“words, with what were used by him when he cele-*  
*“brated the holy Eucharist.” Brett’s Ancient Liturgies,*  
*p. 272. See also Bingham’s Antiquities, book xiii.*  
*chap. 5 and 6.*



would never wilfully and universally have deviated from it.

Calvin himself, the daring author of ecclesiastical innovation, so far from deeming a form of prayer unlawful or inexpedient, actually composed one for his followers<sup>e</sup>, and on a particular occasion thus expressed his judgment on the subject; “For so much as concerns the form of prayers and ecclesiastical rites, I highly approve that it be fixed and certain, and that it be unlawful for the ministers in the discharge of their office to vary from it!” In fact, the Dissenters of our own country, in absolutely discarding every public form as a relic of Papal superstition, are not countenanced by any one even of the reformed Churches, whether Lutheran or Calvinistic, but stand opposed to the united verdict of the Christian world.

The lawfulness of stated forms of wor-

<sup>e</sup> See Dr. Scott, London Cases, p. 283.

<sup>f</sup> “Quod ad formulam precium et rituum ecclesiasticorum valde probo ut certa illa extet, a qua pastoribus discedere in functione sua non licet.” *Calvin, Epist. 87.* (written to the Lord Protector in the reign of Edward VI.)



ship being thus undeniable, it remains to inquire briefly into their general expediency, and more particularly to point out the actual and important advantages which we derive from our own admirable Liturgy, in comparison with the alleged superiority of those extemporaneous services which our adversaries have adopted for themselves.

The chief advantage claimed by the advocates of extemporary prayer is the unrestrained assistance of the Holy Spirit, whom they conceive to inspire their minister with appropriate language and holy fervour, in offering up the devotions of his congregation; whereas in stated forms that divine gift is altogether rejected, and prayer becomes a cold and lifeless performance. But, unquestionably, such a measure of assistance, as is here supposed, is founded on no promise of Scripture. The only passages where prayer appears to be enumerated among spiritual gifts, manifestly couple it with those miraculous and temporary communications of the Spirit, which were vouchsafed for the primary conversion of

§ 1 Cor. chap. xii. and xiv.



the Gentiles; and to "pray with the spirit"<sup>h</sup> appears to be closely connected with that gift of tongues, which St. Paul declared to be "for a sign, not to them that believe, but "to them that believe not."<sup>i</sup> To lay a confident claim then in these days to the possession of such a gift, must be in any, even the most plausible case, an highly unwarrantable presumption; and it will not surely be denied, that instances may sometimes occur, where the extemporaaneous effusion is so marked by vain repetitions, or confusion of thought, by indecorous expressions, or even by heterodoxy and ignorance, as to defy the most determined enthusiast to recognize in it the suggestions of the Spirit. Where then shall he look for that infallible sign which may enable him, in all cases, to distinguish genuine inspiration from its plausible counterfeit, and infallibly secure him from imposture and delusion?

But allowing that a sober and rational expectation may be indulged of the divine

<sup>h</sup> 1 Cor. xiv. 15. See Hammond in loco.

<sup>i</sup> 1 Cor. xiv. 22.



assistance being sometimes accorded to mankind in their addresses to the throne of grace, it may be asked in the language of an able writer, whom I have before had occasion to quote, “ whether we have not “ as much reason to think that the public “ prayers of the Church were suggested by “ that Spirit, as the prayers of any individual? Nay, whether it is not more probable, that a company of learned and pious men, assembled for the purpose of composing a public Liturgy for the use of the Church, after having previously invoked the Divine assistance, should be favoured with that assistance, rather than any particular person, who without pre-meditation or study, and oftentimes without any qualification for the work, takes upon himself to deliver an extemporary prayer<sup>k</sup>? ”

But the advocates for extemporary prayer farther urge, that their method is far more efficacious in exciting the devout attention of a congregation; whereas the perpetual repetition of the same form of words loses

<sup>k</sup> Daubeny's Guide to the Church, vol. i. p. 187.



its hold on the affections, and weakens devotion, if it does not destroy it altogether. Granting however, that a more fixed attention may be thus excited, it may fairly be suspected that it is too frequently the attention of curiosity rather than of devotion; —that the mind is almost of necessity withdrawn from its proper employment, from humble confession and heartfelt penitence, from prayer and adoration and thanksgiving, by the expectation of variety, or the attractions of eloquence<sup>1</sup>; in short,

“ Since the matter of public prayer is old, and for  
“ the main will be always so, why should it not as well  
“ affect us in old words as in new, provided they ex-  
“ pressed it with equal propriety and fitness? But if it  
“ be merely the newness of the phrase it is expressed  
“ in, that fixes their minds, there is nothing in it but a  
“ mere surprise and amusement of their fancies, which,  
“ instead of fixing, does unfix their mind from the in-  
“ ternal acts of prayer, and diverts its attention from the  
“ devotion to the oratory of it; so that this fixation of  
“ their minds on the novelty of the phrase and method  
“ of prayer, is so far from being an advantage, that it is  
“ a distraction to ‘their devotion.’ ” *Dr. Scott, London Cases*, p. 256, 257.

If the genuine spirit of devotional prayer be thus impaired, and public prayer itself obviously assume in a great degree the character of preaching, we may here perhaps trace the origin of that propensity, so notorious



that the minister, whose proper office it is to be the common voice of the whole congregation, and present their united petitions at the footstool of Divine mercy, must be considered rather as evincing his own fervour, and offering his own petitions, than theirs.

Again, it has been contended, that the necessities of Christians being subject by time and circumstance to infinite variations, could never be foreseen or provided against by the composers of a Liturgy, which is unavoidably confined to general petitions only. But it may be confidently replied, that the fact, so far as concerns the case before us, is notoriously otherwise; that the common wants of Christians are, and must ever continue to be, in main points the same. The same daily supply of their temporal necessities, to consider preaching as the most essential portion of divine service, whereas it is really the least so. Without undervaluing the effects of preaching as a powerful means of grace, we may pronounce this a dangerous delusion. The Holy Spirit is promised to those who *ask* it; but we read of those who are *hearers* of the word and *not doers* of it. See some good remarks on this error in Daubeny's Guide to the Church, vol. i. p. 200—205.



poral necessities, the same pardon of sins and peace of conscience, the same grace to support them in temptations and trials, the same protection here and salvation hereafter, must constitute the leading objects of prayer to every Christian society in every age.

Moreover, it is not the province of public prayers to descend to those particular instances which belong to the closet only;—they are the prayers of the whole congregation;—they ought not to confess sin in those specific aggravations, which can apply but to individual cases;—they ought not, as a general rule at least, to offer either petitions or thanksgivings for any blessings but those in which all may be presumed to have, more or less, a common interest<sup>m</sup>. It will not of course be denied, but that occasions may sometimes arise, against which a Liturgy had not provided; but it is obvious that the same ecclesiastical authority which promulgated the Liturgy itself, may provide a form also for the new emergency.

<sup>m</sup> See Dr. Scott, London Cases, p. 263.



The employment of a public form of prayer, however, is attended with advantages peculiar to itself, and supplies a remedy for several positive evils inseparably attendant on extemporary worship. Among the most conspicuous of these advantages is that of being previously acquainted with the prayer which is to be used. It may fairly be questioned indeed, whether it be even possible to join in a public prayer under any other circumstances; whether the mind, engaged as it must be in attending and assenting to what is uttered, must not be altogether incapacitated for immediate devotion; whether the slightest occurrence of interruption, or of those obscurities peculiarly incidental to unpremeditated effusions, must not hopelessly baffle the most willing worshipper.

Besides, a conscientious man may reasonably pause ere he engage heartily in a prayer, until he knows what is prayed. What shall infallibly exempt it from the errors of ignorance or inadvertence? what from irreverence of language, or unsound-



ness of doctrine"? and how, in the midst of such irresolution and suspense, shall his pious affections flow in that even and uninterrupted current, which is essential to the exercise of pure devotion? But when by the aid of an established Liturgy, like our own, we offer up our petitions in a form with which we have an intimate acquaintance, and which we thoroughly approve, we

"To him which considereth the grievous and scandalous inconveniences, whereunto they make themselves daily subject, with whom any blind and secret corner is judged a fit house of common prayer; the manifold confusions which they fall into, where every man's private spirit and gift (as they term it) is the only Bishop that ordaineth him to his ministry; the irksome deformities whereby, through endless and senseless ellusions of indigested prayers, they often times disgrace in most unsufferable manner the worthiest part of Christian duty towards God, who herein are subject to no certain order, but pray both what and how they list; to him, I say, which weigheth duly all these things, the reasons cannot be obscure why God doth in public prayer so much respect the solemnity of places where, the authority and calling of persons by whom, and the precise appointment, even with what words or sentences, his name should be called on amongst his people." *Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity*, book v. ch. 25. octavo edit. vol. ii. p. 107.



may confidently yield every faculty of the soul to the devout employment; we may “ask in faith, nothing wavering,” and “with one mind and one mouth glorify “God.”

Another advantage, and that of the very highest importance, derivable from a stated form of worship, is the preservation of sound doctrine. With no authorized guide to the acknowledged difficulties of those Scriptures, to which every sect can alike resort for a supposed confirmation of its wildest extravagancies, and with no competent security against the ignorance or heterodoxy<sup>q</sup>

o James i. 6.

p Rom. xv. 6.

q “Heterodoxies, false doctrines, yea and heresies, “may be propagated by prayer as well as by preaching, “and by the former perhaps more effectually than by “the latter. For when poor ignorant people shall hear “their minister venting a notion in his address to Al- “mighty God, they will be apt to conclude, and not “without reason, that he is fully assured of the truth of “it, yea, that he hath very good grounds for it, or else he “would not dare to utter it to the face of God himself. “And thus the confidence of the minister easily at first “begets in the simple hearer a good opinion of it, which “by degrees grows to a stedfast belief and persuasion.”  
*Bishop Bull's Sermons*, vol. ii. p. 562, 563.



of his minister, the faith of the unlettered Dissenter lies, as it were, at the mercy of an extemporaneous, and perhaps unpromised and ill-digested discourse.

The Liturgies of the primitive times were carefully composed with a view to an established security against every heretical perversion of the genuine doctrines of Christianity. Our own, framed after the model of those venerable forms, and still probably retaining in its composition sentences consecrated by the lips<sup>r</sup> of the Saints and Martyrs of the apostolic age, is perhaps inferior to none of them in securing the same important point. Can we hesitate to believe, that, in its Creeds of primitive authority, in its repeated Doxologies to the ever blessed Trinity, in its constant reference to the atoning merits of the Saviour of the world, it comprehends within itself a body of faith, as plain and intelligible as it is pure and sound; and that firm barrier against the assaults of irreligion and heresy, to which, under the superintending care of a gracious Providence, we owe at this day the yet un-

<sup>r</sup> See note <sup>d</sup>, p. 274.



impaired enjoyment of the clear light of Gospel<sup>s</sup> truth?

In enumerating the advantages which we derive from the appointed forms of our Church, it is impossible altogether to omit the mention of those which arise from the regular recurrence of her fasts and festivals. By these judicious institutions she directs the piety of her members in due succession to all the grand and interesting subjects of the Gospel; some of which, without such an assistance, might never be revived in our recollections at all. This is an advantage from which the Dissenters, through an unhappy consistency with the system which they have adopted, are wholly excluded. "But the Church," it has been well said, "spends its year with Jesus Christ, and follows him in faith through all the great works of his mediatorial office, from his advent to the sending down of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost!"

I do not feel myself concerned to reply to the minute exceptions which have been

<sup>s</sup> See Bishop Bull's Sermons, vol. ii. p. 563, 564.

<sup>t</sup> Essay on the Church; Scholar Armed, vol. ii. p. 24.



taken against particular expressions<sup>a</sup> and

" The following admirable answer to a very common cavil of this description, may not perhaps be unacceptable. " Some are offended with our praying against " sudden death. But why should we not by sudden " death understand our being taken out of this world " when we are not fit to die? For sometimes a thing is " said to be sudden to us when we are not prepared for " it. And in this sense can any good Christian find fault " with the petition? But suppose that by sudden death " we mean what is commonly understood by it, that is, a " death of which a man has not the least warning by " sickness; are there not reasons why even good men " may not desire to die suddenly? May they not, when " they find themselves drawing towards their end, by " their good instructions and admonitions, make im- " pressions upon their friends, companions, and rela- " tions, to the bettering of them? May not their counsels " be more effectual with them than ever they were be- " fore? And is it not reasonable to believe that they will " be so? As for themselves, may not the warning they " have of approaching death be improved to make them " more fit to die than they were in their perfect health? " In a word, he that thinks himself to have sufficiently " perfected holiness in the fear of God, and not to stand " in need of those acts of self-examination, humiliation, " and devotion, by which good men improve the warn- " ing of death, which mortal sickness or extreme age " gives them, let him suspend his act, and refuse to join " with us, when we pray God to deliver us from sudden " death." Dr. Claget, *Answer to the Dissenters' Objec-*  
tions against the Common Prayer; London Cases, p. 295,  
296.



passages of our Liturgy. Whether well founded or not, they can have no material effect on the present discussion. Imperfections are of course presumed to exist in every production of fallible man. But this I would decisively observe, that if schism be an offence which we have the highest authority for classing with crimes of the deepest die;—and if it be not, the Scriptures should be carefully revised, and the Church be taught to renounce the cherished error of eighteen centuries;—whilst, on the other hand, the observances to which conformity is required, being in themselves matters of comparative indifference, derive whatever consequence they possess, from the lawful power which appoints them;—flagrant must be the abuses, and gross the corruptions, which could in any degree justify the decisive and hazardous measure of wilful separation. I would maintain, that even were the case altogether reversed;—were every advantage which I have shewn to attend the forms of our Church, to be found in the practice of the conventicle, and all the inconveniences of extemporaneous wor-



ship confined to ourselves alone; yet still the result of the argument would be in the main the same. For how can it consist with the plainest maxims of prudence and discretion, to balance a few insignificant observances, which concern not the salvation of the soul, with a sin that notoriously endangers it?

Excellent indeed must be the Church whose institutions are incapable of amendment; sadly corrupt must be that Church where the sincere and humble Christian may not securely and effectually “work out “his own salvation.” Shall it be con-

\* “ Is there, or will there ever be, any government in  
“ the Church, so well framed and built, but some cu-  
“ rious surveyor can spy out some disproportion or ill  
“ shape, especially if assisted by ill-nature, emulation,  
“ the spirit of pride and contention, which is ever quick-  
“ sighted abroad and blind at home? The difficulty of  
“ knowing what is utmost perfection and absolute pu-  
“ rity of administrations, (which till attained, these men  
“ think they are not to rest in any Church,) should  
“ make them judge candidly, interpret fairly, and com-  
“ ply with every thing that is not sinful, to preserve  
“ peace and love. When men in the English Church  
“ are plainly taught to believe well, to live well, and to  
“ die well, and have good and proper offices to serve  
“ these great purposes, in order to their salvation, what



ceived, then, that men compromise their eternal interests by conforming to that pure and apostolical Church, and that sublime and primitive Liturgy, for which our martyred Reformers were content to sacrifice their lives?

A complete removal of every difference of opinion, in all that relates to the less important doctrines and institutions of a Church, is, under the present constitution of our nature, as we all know, impossible; but a quiet submission to authority, and a peaceful communion with each other, notwithstanding such differences, is not only possible, but our bounden and positive

“ can they desire more? To be better or more saved, we  
“ know not what it means. To leave such a commu-  
“ nion upon such an account, proceeds from peevish-  
“ ness, uncharitableness, or some ill principle; and is  
“ downright schism, if ever there was schism in the  
“ world. Bring but an honest, sincere, and teachable  
“ mind, and it will find improvement and advantage in  
“ offices and administrations, fuller of spots and ble-  
“ mishes far, than they can pretend to find in the Eng-  
“ lish Church; but if the mind be biassed by a party, or  
“ corrupted by designs, if its palate be vitiated, the best  
“ food is coarse and insipid to it.” *Dr. Hascard, Discourse of Edification; London Cases, p. 463.*



duty. “ If in any thing ye be otherwise minded,” says St. Paul, “ God shall reward even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.” How else can we testify our love of peace and union, or escape the imputation of that “ pride” by which “ cometh contention<sup>a</sup>? ” How else can we be fairly said to avoid “ doubtful disputations<sup>a</sup>,” and to do nothing “ through strife or vainglory<sup>b</sup>? ” By what other course can we evince our claim to those graces so preeminently Christian, so conspicuously classed amongst the “ fruits of the Spirit,” “ gentleness, meekness,

<sup>a</sup> Philip. iii. 15, 16. “ This last clause, *let us mind the same thing*, is in the sense of the original, *let us be unanimous*, as Bishop Stillingfleet has shewn, (Unreasonableness of Separation, part 2. section 19;) and he has at the same place largely shewn, that this advice of the Apostle is intended for this very purpose to which I have here applied it, namely, that such a man as we are here speaking of, should continue in communion, and conform to all that he can, and omit the saying *Amen* to what he judges a mistake.” *Wall’s Hist. of Infant Baptism*, vol. ii. p. 420, 4th edit.

<sup>b</sup> Prov. xiii. 10.      <sup>a</sup> Rom. xiv. 1.      <sup>b</sup> Philip. ii. 3.



“ long-suffering<sup>c</sup>? ” Where, in fine, will be the traces of that heavenly “ charity,” which is superior to all “ mysteries and all know-  
ledge,” which “ vaunteth not itself, is  
“ not puffed up, doth not behave itself  
“ unseemly,” which, rather than furnish occasion for offence or confusion or disunion, to the utmost verge of its Christian liberty, “ beareth and endureth all  
“ things<sup>d</sup>? ”

To adopt the language of a most eminent ornament of our Church, “ It is better to be humble than to be a prophet ; “ it is better to be righteous, than to have “ the faith of miracles ; and it is better to “ be holy than to have the gift of tongues. “ But to be peaceable, and love union, is “ as great a grace as to be humble, righteous, and holy ; nay, as to be pure and temperate ;—for it is equalled with all those and many other of the prime graces in the New Testament ; it is reckoned, with many of them, among the fruits of the Spirit ; and the fruits of the

<sup>c</sup> Gal. v. 22, 23.

<sup>d</sup> 1 Cor. xiii. 2—7.



“ Spirit are better and more desirable than  
“ the gifts thereof.”

• Hickes's Posthumous Discourses, sermon vii.



## SERMON VII.

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JOHN xviii. 36.

*My kingdom is not of this world.*

THE intimate union generally subsisting throughout the Christian world between the ecclesiastical and civil powers, so greatly to their mutual advantage where it is conducted with discretion, has nevertheless sometimes given occasion to the most erroneous ideas of the nature of Christ's spiritual kingdom, and the extent of its authority. In ages more favourable than the present to the machinations of priesthood and the delusions of superstition, it led to the undue, and not unfrequently the mischievous, influence of spiritual men over affairs purely temporal. And now by a reaction, as natural perhaps, as it is excessive and prejudicial, it has tended to a corresponding subjection of ecclesiastical authority to the powers of the world, until the



original independence of the Church of Christ is in a great measure forgotten, and her claims to respect and obedience and conformity, if admitted at all, are admitted rather as those of a national and political establishment, than of a society of divine institution.

That errors of this description are eminently hostile to the general welfare of the Church, and more particularly to the cause of Christian unity, and the efficacious and salutary exercise of ecclesiastical discipline, is sufficiently evident. Under their influence, the sincerest friends to the Church lose the better portion of their motives to communion, and conform from those motives only, or chiefly, which would fail them on the first occurrence of civil revolution affecting her outward polity; whilst the schismatic loses all sense of his offence, and practically confounds political toleration with full religious liberty. Under their influence, the statesman habitually and unconsciously invades the province of the ecclesiastic, and the ecclesiastic as unconsciously surrenders his dormant privileges,



till discipline is abandoned as impracticable, from the declension of the authority which should enforce it, and the once awful sentence of censure and excommunication has become an obsolete tradition ; not surely from the absence of all occasion for its exercise, not surely from the improved state of spiritual subordination, or the extinction of heretical tenets, but from this plain cause, amongst others which might be named, that in our reformed and protestant community the censures of a pure and apostolical Church, unsupported by civil penalties, would incur the public contempt, as certainly and almost as generally, as the vain fulminations of Papal displeasure.

I. The fluctuations of human opinion affect not the immovable stability of truth and fact. The essential distinctness of the ecclesiastical and civil powers is a truth of equal certainty, and at least equal importance, as if men had never learnt to question it ; and as if their long established union, and the habitual submission of the one to the other, in those points which to



vulgar apprehension the most conspicuously mark superiority and prerogative, had never furnished a natural origin, as well as a plausible apology, for the error. And the fact of their separate and independent existence for the space of three successive centuries, might perhaps be deemed sufficiently illustrative of this truth; though a consideration of the respective natures and ends of each, is calculated to prove it still more decisively.

The spiritual authority of the Church, and the secular power of the State, have been aptly compared to two parallel lines; —if carefully restrained within their appointed courses, they cannot interfere. They are distinct in their sphere of action, in the objects which they have respectively in view, and in the means which they employ for their attainment. The one is concerned for the souls of men, the other for their bodies. The one regards those blessings and graces which may secure their salvation in a future state; the other, the protection of their persons and properties, and whatever else may tend to their well-



being in the life which now is. The one disclaims all coercive power, and enforces its laws but by those censures for the present, and denunciations for the future, which can influence the conduct of men by their faith alone;—the other compels obedience by temporal penalties, sensibly affecting their outward circumstances<sup>a</sup>. Hence

<sup>a</sup> “That civil and religious societies are *essentially different*, is evident from their having *different ends and means*; the ultimate end of one being the care of *souls*, and that of the other of *bodies*; and the means of the one being by *external actions*, and that of the other by *internal*.” *Bishop Warburton, Alliance of Church and State*, p. 65. third edit. “The rights which this power (the ecclesiastical) is designed to secure, are of quite a different sort from our civil rights and liberties. They are such as *Greeks* and *Barbarians, bond and free*, they who have *civil rights*, and they who have *none*, are all alike capable of enjoying;—for all of them are *one* and the same in *Christ Jesus*. (*Gal. iii. 28. Col. iii. 11.*) The rewards and punishments whereby this power enforceth its laws, are chiefly *spiritual and future*, and such as in this life can only influence men by means of their faith; whereas those which proceed from the civil power, if they do not reach us in *this life*, cannot affect us at all. Lastly, the laws enacted by this power, though they are the greatest security to the civil government which can possibly be devised, are very different from the laws which are there in force; these latter being



it is evident, that the selfsame criminal might receive absolution, on his repentance, from the Church, though his life were forfeited to the offended State; and on the other hand, might be acquitted or pardoned by the State, yet incur the severest censures of the Church; whilst at the same time these two independent authorities, thus differing in their judgment respecting the same individual, might each carry into the fullest execution its own peculiar sentence, without interfering in the remotest degree with the proceedings of the <sup>b</sup> other.

The persecutions with which the civil power assailed the Church during the primitive ages, if rightly considered, offer no contradiction to this reasoning. They were not the efforts of the State to restrain the encroachments of a dangerous rival, but of idolatry taking advantage of the power of the State for its own peculiar

"designed to maintain the *outward* peace and prosperity of the world, whereas the end of the former is to "promote our *everlasting* happiness." *Archbishop Potter, Discourse of Church Government*, p. 22.

<sup>b</sup> See Leslie's Case of the Regale and of the Pontificate; Works, vol. i. p. 608.



ends. Political hostility, strictly so called, could not consistently assail those who were beyond example eminent for political submission. If it can in any degree be considered to have done so, it can only be attributed to the temporary, and assuredly unnecessary, implication of civil policy with the cause of Paganism.

As little can the contests between the ecclesiastical and civil powers, which disturbed the middle ages, be considered as demonstrative of their inherent rivalry. If emperors and kings sometimes invaded the spiritual privileges of the Church, and the Church still more frequently interfered with the authority of the temporal prince;—if ecclesiastics refused to contribute, in common with their fellow subjects, to the exigencies of his government, and the Pope assumed the right of deposing him from his temporal sovereignty, to such unwarrantable encroachments alone can we in fairness attribute the confusions which ensued.

When Pilate had received the declaration of the blessed Jesus, that his “kingdom” was



“not of this world,” he candidly acknowledged, “I find no fault in him at all<sup>c</sup>;”—in spite of the malicious insinuations of the Jews, and his own timidity and weakness, his better judgment was manifestly convinced that he might thus “make himself “a king,” and yet not “speak against Cæ-“sar<sup>d</sup>.” “Our blessed Saviour,” says the ingenious Leslie, “in his allwise provi-“dence, foreseeing the consequences on “both sides, as he set up his Church in-“dependent of all the powers upon the “earth, so he gave her no authority that “could possibly interfere with the civil “powers. He altered nothing of the civil “powers, but left them as he found them; “he gave to Caesar all that was Caesar’s; “—but the things of God, and the ad-“ministration of the spiritual kingdom of “heaven upon earth, that he left in the “hands of his Church, and accountable to “none but himself<sup>e</sup>. ”

Of this utter renunciation by the Church of all civil and coercive power, the conduct

<sup>c</sup> John xviii. 38.

<sup>d</sup> John xix. 12.

<sup>e</sup> Leslie’s Case of the Regale &c. Works, vol i. p. 609.



of our Saviour on other occasions is strikingly illustrative. When requested by an individual to restrain for him the injustice of his brother, his reply was, “Man, who ‘made me a judge or a divider over you’?” When giving directions for the treatment of an obstinate offender, who should “neglect to hear the Church,” and, in fact, when establishing the right of excommunication, the point on which perhaps the inherent privileges of the Church make the nearest approaches to coercive power, he appointed nothing analogous to civil penalty, but merely that he should be considered “as an heathen man and a publican<sup>g</sup>. ”

It must indeed be obvious, that this systematic rejection of every claim to enforce obedience by the ordinary methods of civil compulsion, is the main foundation of that natural independence on the powers of the world, which is asserted for the Church, or rather, perhaps, that it is the only principle which fully vindicates it from the objection which has been so frequently urged against

<sup>f</sup> Luke xii. 14.

<sup>g</sup> Matth. xviii. 17.



it, of creating that political anomaly, the *imperium in imperio*; for it will readily be conceded, that if such were really the fact, if a government of rival pretensions were really set up within the limits of another, the contest thence resulting could find no satisfactory or peaceful termination but in the submission of the weaker party.

On this point Bishop Warburton, though not altogether a safe guide in ecclesiastical matters, argues with great force and justice. Speaking of what he calls “the two great “essential characters of a religious society, “its *independency* and its *disclaim of coercive power*,” he adds, “it is worth observing, that the arguments we have employed to prove each of these characters belonging to it, are strongly enforced by the necessary connexion there is between them. For admit the religious society to be *independent*, and you invincibly destroy all pretence to *coercive power*: because coercive power introduces an *imperium in imperio*, which is removed only by destroying the independency. Admit again that the religious society has *no co-*



" coercive power, and you supersede all the  
" State's claim of dependency; a claim  
" solely founded on the evil of an *imperium*  
" *in imperio*, which evil can arise no other-  
" wise than by the Church's exercise of an  
" inherent coercive power<sup>b</sup>."

If it be argued, that the Church is evidently in possession of certain privileges which require the safeguard of coercive power, and that she does in fact exercise it for their security, it may be replied, that these privileges, as well as the power to secure them, are solely derived from her union with the State, and that in the event of a dissolution of that connexion they would be lost to her at once. We are not however to believe, that under such deprivation she would become altogether weak and defenceless, and wholly incompetent to fulfil the purposes of her appointment. Relinquishing what was merely adventitious, she would still retain all that spiritual authority over her own members, which her divine Master had bestowed upon her, and which

<sup>b</sup> Warburton's Alliance, p. 78, 79.



the records of the primitive ages may decidedly convince us are all that is absolutely essential to her preservation as a well regulated society<sup>i</sup>.

Neither is it to be imagined that, in the legitimate exercise of this authority, she could possibly afford any reasonable cause of jealousy to the civil magistrate. However incompatible may be the service of God and Mammon, so far from there existing any inconsistency in being at once the faithful servants of Christ and the loyal subjects of our temporal rulers, the rebellious subject is at the same time the disobedient Christian; and it is not to be

<sup>i</sup> "What hath made some well meaning men apprehend sad consequences from the Church's being left without the guard of coercive power, is their seeing it stand possessed of some advantages, by them supposed essential to a Church, which coercive power only can secure. But these may be eas'd of their apprehensions by being told, that those advantages are only adventitious, and bestowed upon it by the State in consequence of an union; and as the State granted these, it granted coercive power likewise to defend them; and that when the union is dissolved, they both fall together, without any essential damage to the Church, as a religious society." *Warburton's Alliance*, p. 77, 78.



conceived that the proud masters of the ancient world could anywhere have discovered more unshaken loyalty, or more cheerful obedience, than in those who professed and practised submission to “the powers “that be,” “not only for wrath, but also “for conscience sake<sup>k</sup>;” whom nevertheless, with a policy no less preposterous than it was barbarous and inhuman, they continued to persecute and destroy.

II. It is not however necessary to conclude from this natural independence of the Church on the civil powers, and her inherent competency to her own support, that she was for ever to remain in the same separate condition in which she was originally left by our Saviour and his Apostles. When the rage of persecution had ceased, and the rulers of the world, themselves converted to the faith, evinced a disposition to protect and honour her, it would be difficult to have assigned any plausible reason for her absolutely refusing that protection, and despising that honour. So to have interpreted the declaration of Christ, that his

<sup>k</sup> Rom. xiii. 5.



"kingdom was not of this world," would have been consistent with nothing but the most senseless fanaticism, and in truth would very materially have impeded the extension of his kingdom among men. Though *not of the world*, it was at least *in it*, and established in it for its conversion and salvation; objects far more likely to be attained by conciliation and friendly intercourse, than by maintaining the proud distance of continued separation.

The prophetic intimations of her destined greatness, were calculated to give her a far different impression of the course which it became her to pursue. She could not but anticipate the day, when "kings" should be her "nursing fathers," "and their queens" her "nursing mothers"<sup>1</sup>;—when "the Gentiles" should "come to" her "light, and "kings to the brightness of" her "rising".<sup>m</sup> And when the actual arrival of that auspicious era opened to her the prospect of establishing an harmonious union between the ordinances of man and the institutions of Christ, for their mutual and more effec-

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah xlix. 23.

<sup>m</sup> Isaiah lx. 3.



tive sanction and support, she could scarcely have hesitated either as to the lawfulness or the expediency of the projected alliance, fortified as she must have been by the recollection of that intimate union between the ecclesiastical and civil authorities, which had for ages subsisted in the Jewish state by the especial appointment of Heaven.

In fact, when once Christianity had so far prevailed, as to become on the whole the popular religion, the same individuals would for the most part compose the bulk both of the Church and the State. Between two societies so constituted, mutual good-will would be inevitable; and a disposition to unite their interests, besides being natural in itself, would be encouraged by the sure prospect of the highest advantage to both the contracting parties.

In the first place, the State could not fail to discover abundant motives for endeavouring to secure to itself so useful an ally. It could possess no security for the loyalty of its subjects equally efficacious with the general diffusion of religious principle; and of all religions Christianity is the most fa-



avourable to the cause of civil government, declaring it to be “ordained of God,” and placing the obligations to obedience on the only foundation which could permanently resist the natural love of innovation, and the fluctuating notions of political expediency.

Again, there are various crimes of the most pernicious tendency to human society, which lie in a great measure beyond the reach of temporal penalties; which do not manifest themselves in those outward and notorious acts, of which the civil magistrate can regularly and usefully take cognizance, but may still come within the effectual control of a spiritual tribunal<sup>o</sup>.

<sup>n</sup> Rom. xiii. 1.

<sup>o</sup> “The State punisheth deviations from the rule of right, as *crimes* only; and not as *such* deviations, or as *sins*; and on that first idea proportions its punishments; by which means some very enormous deviations from the rule of right, which do not immediately affect society, and so are not considered as *crimes*, are overlooked by the civil tribunal. Yet these being immediately highly pernicious to the State, it is for its interests that they should be brought before some capable tribunal. But besides the civil, there is no other than the ecclesiastical endowed with coactive power. Hence may be deduced the true and only end and use of spiritual courts.” *Warburton’s Alliance*, p. 100, 101.



Besides, every government, which is duly solicitous for the welfare of its subjects, or which is even selfishly interested for its own security, will direct its endeavours rather to the prevention of offences than to their punishment; though it is at the same time evident that, in its separate and unassisted capacity, it is most incompetent to the purpose. It may punish the external act, but of the depraved motive, the true source of that act, it can seldom presume to form a judgment, much less interfere for its correction. But Christianity is a religion of motives. It not only measures the heinousness of the external action by the motive which induced it, but imposing its powerful restraint on the motive itself, endeavours to anticipate that actual perpetration by which the peace of society is disturbed. It suppresses fraud and rapine in the primary inclination to envy and covetousness;—licentious irregularities, in the dawning indications of vicious propensity;—violence and bloodshed, in the first motions of malice and resentment;—and lays the axe to the very root of rebellion and



treason, by cutting off the unruliness of pride, and checking the earliest growth of inordinate ambition<sup>p</sup>.

Of this the civil magistrate could not fail to be duly sensible. Can it surprise us then that he should be anxious to engage more decidedly in his interest a coadjutor so effective, that he should be eager to extend to the Church his protection and support, to raise her to honour and respect, and bestow on her whatever else might promote the extension of an influence so eminently beneficial to himself?

p "A politic use of religion..... there is..... Men fearing God are thereby a great deal more effectually than by positive laws restrained from doing evil, insasmuch as those laws have no further power than over our outward actions only; whereas unto men's inward cogitations, unto the privy intents and motions of their hearts, religion serveth for a bridle. What more savage, wild, and cruel than man, if he see himself able either by fraud to overreach, or by power to overbear, the laws whereunto he should be subject? Wherefore in so great boldness to offend, it behoveth that the world should be held in awe, not by a vain surmise, but by a true apprehension of somewhat which no man may think himself able to withstand. This is the politic use of religion." *Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity*, book v. sect. 2. vol. ii. p. 15, 16. 8vo ed.



On the other hand, the benefits which the Church might derive from an intimate union with the civil power, were such as to supply her with the most reasonable inducement to accept these offers of friendship and alliance. For setting aside the interested views of mere worldly advantage, which might form the inducement of many among her individual members, and which ought not to enter into the calculation, there were objects which she might hope to secure by this alliance, to which, as a society appointed for the express purpose of diffusing far and near the saving knowledge of the Gospel of Christ, and conscientiously and steadfastly keeping before her eyes the momentous ends of her appointment, she could not possibly be indifferent.

Could she be indifferent to a connexion which should protect her from external violence, and at once exempt her from every apprehension of those cruel persecutions which had hitherto confined her numbers, and effectually restrained her progress among the irresolute and weak? Could



she be insensible to the advantages of an established and competent maintenance, which should raise her above the uncertainties of caprice, and permanently secure a regularly ordained ministry, and with it the pure light of evangelical truth to every individual within the remotest limits of her jurisdiction? Could she reject as unimportant that additional sanction which the civil magistrate was disposed to give to her authority, which would thenceforth mark the conduct of the refractory with the guilt of twofold disobedience, and expose them at once to civil penalty and ecclesiastical censure? Was she even bound (as some have been disposed to argue) to refuse, as unlawful or inexpedient, the wealth, the secular dignity, and the political authority with which the piety or the policy of princes has not unfrequently invested her superior members;—in a world where influence is closely attendant on wealth, and respect on dignity of station;—in a world, too, where respect and influence, if applied with due discretion, can be deemed no despicable auxiliaries even in the propagation and



maintenance of religion itself? Is there, in short, any law, divine or human, which should confine her ministers to the secondary and inferior ranks of life, and by consequence not only preclude them from some of the fairest occasions of commanding to the favour of the temporal powers, and otherwise effectually promoting her genuine interests, but deprive the superior classes of society of every beneficial intercourse with spiritual directors, whom they could personally respect, and thus convert the highest boast of the Gospel of Christ into its most obvious defect, by making it too literally and too exclusively “good ‘tidings to the poor?’”

That it was decidedly the will of Heaven, that the Church should in due season reap the benefit of civil protection and support, and form an intimate connexion with the State for that desirable purpose, may be further argued from the apparent impossibility (so far as past experience can be depended on) of her ever, under any other circumstances, possessing that general influence, and extending to a whole people that equal



and permanent participation of religious advantages, which must have been graciously intended by her divine Founder, and uniting them in those common bonds of faith and worship, which are essential to that blessed unity which is her scriptural characteristic.—Leagued with the temporal power of imperial Rome, even the absurdities of Paganism maintained a struggle of three centuries against all the purity of primitive Christianity, and all the zeal of her saints and martyrs. Finally adopted and encouraged by the same power, the Church of Christ was soon enabled to efface every vestige of lingering idolatry.—Again, in the case of an eminent republic of modern date, abandoned to her own resources, though not persecuted by the civil power, the genuine apostolical Church of Christ has succeeded in attaching to her communion comparatively but a remnant, whilst the bulk of the population, left to their own discretion both in faith and practice, have wandered, as might be expected, to the remotest extremes of error, and exhibit but little medium between sectarian



fanaticism and the most barbarous irreligion<sup>q</sup>.

“ “ The General Government has no power to interfere with or regulate the religion of the Union, and “ the States generally have not legislated further than “ to incorporate with certain restrictions such religious “ bodies as have applied for charter. In consequence of “ this entire indifference on the part of the State-governments, full *one third* of our whole population are destitute of all religious ordinances, and a much greater proportion in our southern and western districts.” *Bristed's America and her Resources*, chap. vii. p. 408. London edit. 1818. “ Sanctuary they have none. They lose “ by degrees their anxiety for the institutions of Christ. “ Their feeble substitutes, their small social meetings, “ without the ‘ministers of grace,’ soon die away. Their “ sabbaths are Pagan. Their children grow up in ignorance, in unbelief, and in vice. Their land, which “ smiles around them like the garden of God, presents an “ unbroken scene of spiritual desolation. In the course “ of one or two generations, the knowledge of God is almost obliterated; the name of Jesus is a foreign sound, “ his salvation an occult science; and while plenty “ crowns their board, and health invigorates their bodies, “ the bread of life blesses not their table; and moral pestilence is sweeping their souls unto death..... “ We have already a population of some millions of our “ own colour, flesh, and blood, nearly as destitute of “ evangelical mercies as the savage who yells on the “ banks of the Missouri.” *Dr. Mason's Plea for Catholic Communion*, p. 388. “ There are however “ some sectaries even here with more of enthusiasm than “ good temper; but their zeal finds sufficient vent in



Viewed in this light, it would be difficult to appreciate too highly the benefits of a well regulated alliance between the ecclesiastical and civil powers; and we may be fairly justified in concluding, that the true principles of that alliance must have been grossly misunderstood at its original formation, or the neglect of them in subsequent practice been more than ordinarily flagrant, which could wholly overthrow such important advantages.

That errors of this description have been too frequently, I fear I may say usually, incurred, and, though they may not have altogether destroyed, yet have in a greater or less degree impaired the beneficial effects of ecclesiastical establishments, will scarcely be denied. They have been incurred too, like most other human errors, by a deviation from the direct path of pru-

"loud preaching and praying. The Court-house is used  
"by all persuasions indifferently as a place of worship;  
"any acknowledged preacher who announces himself  
"for a Sunday or other day, may always collect an audi-  
"ence, and rave or reason as he sees meet." *Birkbeck's Letters from Illinois*, p. 21.



dence and discretion into two extremes of opposite character and tendency,—both perhaps equally at variance with our blessed Saviour's solemn declaration, that his “kingdom was not of this world.”

The first is that of those who would claim for the Church, in virtue of a divine and inherent right, all those powers and dignities and emoluments which she is found to enjoy under the most favoured establishment, and who would even arrogate to the hierarchy a measure of secular authority encroaching unwarrantably on the prerogative of the civil magistrate.

But “to the Prince or to the law,” as Bp. Horsley has justly declared, “we acknowledge ourselves indebted for all our secular possessions; for the rank and dignity annexed to the superior order of the Clergy; for our secular authority; for the jurisdiction of our courts; for every civil effect which follows the exercise of our spiritual authority. All these rights and honours, with which the priesthood is adorned by the piety of the civil magistrate, are quite distinct from the spi-



" ritual commission which we bear for the  
" administration of our Lord's proper king-  
" dom. They have no necessary connexion  
" with it; they stand merely on the ground  
" of human law, and vary, like the rights of  
" other citizens, as the laws which create  
" them vary."

Directly opposed to this error, which may be considered to have derived its origin from Papal usurpation, to have sunk with its decline, and in fact to be well nigh extinct in all Protestant communities, is that of those who wholly confound their idea of the Church of Christ with that of a political establishment; derive her authority from the appointment of the civil magistrate, and consider her, even in the exercise of her spiritual functions, as altogether subordinate to the State;—or if they cannot entirely overlook the notorious fact of her original independence, they contend that she has long since surrendered her peculiar privileges, in exchange for those tem-

\* Bishop Horsley's Charge to the Clergy of the Diocese of St. David's, at his primary Visitation in 1790.



poral advantages which she is now permitted to enjoy.

It must however be obvious, that, had the Church felt the inclination to make this surrender, she could possess no right to do so. It is utterly inconceivable that the sacred powers committed to her by her heavenly Founder for the extension and government of his kingdom upon earth, could be lawfully commuted for ease or opulence, for political power or secular dignity. To adopt the emphatic language of the learned Sherlock, “if Bishops will not “ exercise that power which Christ has “ given them, they are accountable to their “ Lord for it; but they cannot give it away, “ neither from themselves, nor from their “ successors; for it is theirs only to use, “ not to part with; and therefore every Bishop may reassume such rights, though “ a general council should give them away, “ because the grant is void in itself.”<sup>s</sup>

Every just scheme therefore of alliance between the Church and the State, must be

<sup>s</sup> Sherlock’s Summary of the Controversy between the Church of England and the Church of Rome, p. 119.



formed on the principles of a federal, not an incorporating union; an union between independent powers, combining together for their mutual advantage and support, conceding perhaps to each other some points of minor accommodation, but still retaining every essential privilege which marked their original and separate constitutions<sup>t</sup>.

### III. On principles thus sound, and on

"When the State came into the Church, these two  
"separate kingdoms became united in the same civil so-  
"ciety. But in this case the union being an accidental  
"circumstance, did not affect the original independent  
"rights of either party. It was rather a *federal* than an  
"incorporating union; an union of agreement between  
"two parties; by which, powers having a jurisdiction  
"independent of each other, were brought to act toge-  
"ther for the general advantage of society. Should it  
"be the will of Providence that a separation should  
"again take place between these two kingdoms, the  
"State will leave the Church, so far as respects its  
"government, just in the same condition in which it  
"was, previous to their original connexion. Expressly  
"in this condition is the Episcopal Church in Scotland,  
"and in the United States of America, at this moment;  
"where its members receive not the least aid or power  
"from the State; of which therefore, excepting in their  
"civil capacity, they are completely independent." *Dau-*  
*beny's Guide to the Church*, Appendix, p. 93, 94. 2d edit.



terms thus advantageous, we may boast that our excellent Establishment was framed by the Reformers of our Church. For if the declarations both of the Church and of the State, as set forth in our Articles and Homilies and other authorized documents, recognize correctly and satisfactorily the just limits of ecclesiastical and civil power, we are by no means concerned to take into the calculation any unreasonable assertion or exercise of the royal supremacy which occurred during the ferment of the Reformation ; which was disclaimed by succeeding sovereigns, or virtually annulled by subsequent laws of more moderate character<sup>a</sup>.

<sup>a</sup> "This Act (26 Hen. VIII. cap. 1.) and all others relating to the King's ecclesiastical supremacy, are to be interpreted in a sense consistent with those other Acts of Parliament, which confirm the Book of Common Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, according to the Church of England; and the form and manner of making, ordaining, and consecrating Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. In those offices the sacerdotal power, as distinct from the civil, is clearly expressed and asserted." *Hickes on the Dignity of the Episcopal Order*, p. 235, 236. See also Homily on the right Use of the Church, part 2.      "Bishop Jewell



It is quite sufficient, in proof of this, to refer to the Declaration of our Articles; “ We give not to our princes the ministering either of God’s word or of the sacraments”.... “ but that only prerogative, which we see to have been given always to all godly princes in holy Scriptures by God himself; that is, that they should rule all estates and degrees committed to their charge by God, whether they be ecclesiastical or temporal, and restrain with the civil sword the stubborn and evil-doers.” “ This explanation,” as

“ in a letter to Bullinger dated May 22, 1559, writes, ‘that the Queen refused to be called the Head of the Church,’ and adds, ‘that the title could not be justly given to any mortal.’ Therefore Queen Elizabeth laid aside the title of Head of the Church, and instead thereof the word Governor was put into the oath” (of supremacy) “as it stands to this day.” *Leslie’s Case of the Regale &c. Works*, vol. i. p. 625. “ The writ of Congé d’élire was taken away by Act of Parliament, 1 Edw. VI. c. 2. as too great an encroachment upon the Regale. But our kings are grown ashamed of that, and still continue the method of Congé d’élire, though let loose from it by the law.” *Ibid.* p. 677.

\* Article XXXVII. “ Our kings claim no other ecclesiastical authority than was granted by God to the kings in holy Scripture, and what that was we have



Bishop Burnet justly argues, “must be considered as the true measure of the King’s supremacy, and the wide expressions in the former laws must be understood to be restrained by this; since posterior laws derogate from those that were at first made. . . . This is all that supremacy which we are bound in conscience to own; and if the letter of the law, or the stretches of that in the administration of it, have carried this farther, we are not at all concerned in it.” The Christian

“seen before to have nothing in it but mere civil power; though it might be exercised over ecclesiastical persons, (who are subject, as all others, as Christ himself was, to the civil powers in all civil things,) and in ecclesiastical causes too, to punish with temporal pains, as well blasphemers, idolaters, and heretics, as thieves, robbers, &c.; as well the transgressors against the first, as second table.” *Leslie’s Case of the Regale &c.* Works, vol. i. p. 624.

y Bishop Burnet’s Reflexions on the Relation of the English Reformation, p. 20. “If the great and unmeasured extent of the Papal authority made our princes judge it necessary to secure themselves from those invasions by stretching their jurisdiction a little too much;.....and if in the time of our Reformation some of our Bishops or other writers have carried the royal supremacy too far, either in Acts of Convo-



prince therefore, as it has been sometimes expressed, has authority *circa sacra*, but not *in sacris*;—he may both lawfully and beneficially compel spiritual men to the regular performance of their duty, though he has no concern in their sacred functions.

As little can we deem any subsequent encroachments of the State on our ecclesiastical constitution, or any deviation from its recorded principles into which the Clergy may themselves have fallen, as disproving its original and intrinsic merits. If our practice had indeed corresponded in all respects with the spirit of those laws which should have directed it, if the power of the civil magistrate had been restrained within its intended limits, were merely a civil power over spiritual persons, and carefully avoided all unauthorized interference with their inherent privileges, then might we

“ cation, or in their writings, as those things are per-  
“ sonal matters, in which we are not at all concerned,  
“ who do not pretend to assert an infallibility in our  
“ Church; so their excess in this was a thing so natu-  
“ ral, that we have all possible reason to excuse it, or at  
“ least to censure it very gently.” *Bishop Burnet's  
Reflexions, &c.* p. 23.



have boasted of a Church, not only pure in her doctrines and apostolical in her polity, which is her still remaining praise, but respected for her effective and primitive discipline, and, in comparison at least with the lamentable divisions which at present disturb her peace and threaten her security, united in herself.

As the case now stands however, it cannot be disguised that we have to deplore in various instances a most pernicious departure from a constitution excellent in itself, and defective only by abuse. Not to enter into a tedious detail of the particulars in which this departure may be traced, I shall briefly advert to two only; the total disuse of primitive discipline, and the long continued neglect of synodical assemblies.

So far however from our laws having contemplated the downfall of ecclesiastical discipline, their undoubted purpose was to second and support, by civil penalties, the censures of the Church. If through an unfortunate intricacy in their construction, and consequent ignorance and irregularity



in their administration, they have become in a great measure obsolete and inefficient, or, what is worse, have actually impeded and embarrassed the very object which they were designed to promote, it is ours to lament, and if possible to remedy, an evil so destructive of ecclesiastical authority, not to question the views and intention of the laws themselves<sup>z</sup>.

<sup>z</sup> The failure of the commission, appointed in the reign of Edward VI, (see note <sup>1</sup>, p. 9.) in finally accomplishing the reformed digest of our ecclesiastical laws, is infinitely to be lamented. The difficulty of administering them in their present form may be easily conceived from the following statement of Burn. “The ecclesiastical law of England is compounded of these four main ingredients; the *Civil* law, the *Canon* law, the *Common* law, and the *Statute* law.....Where these laws do interfere and cross each other, the order of preference is this; the *Civil* law submitteth to the *Canon* law; both these to the *Common* law; and all the three to the *Statute* law. So that from any one or more of these, without all of them together, or from all of these together, without attending to their comparative obligation, it is not possible to exhibit any distinct prospect of the English ecclesiastical constitution.” *Burn’s Ecclesiastical Law*, Preface, p. xv. seventh edit. The Papal origin of the *Canon* law has no doubt contributed to render it in a great degree obsolete. It consists of the *Decreta* of Gratian, published



Again, those laws cannot be deemed adverse to synodical assemblies, which periodically summon a convocation, and recognize it as an estate of the realm<sup>a</sup>. If the convocation itself has become an empty shadow, and has virtually transferred its powers to the State, it is to other causes

A. D. 1149; the *Decretals*, 1231; the *Decretum Sextum* of Boniface VIII. 1298; the *Clementine Constitutions*, 1317; and the *Extravagants* of John XXII. 1325, and of some other Popes. Add to these our own *Legatine* and *Provincial Constitutions*, the former made in national Synods held by the Legates of the Popes, and the latter in convocations held by the several Archbishops of Canterbury from Langton to Chicheley. The statute, 25 Henry VIII. c. 19, which prepared the way for the revisal of this heterogeneous mass, provided at the same time that it should continue in force, so far as it was not contrary to the laws of the realm, &c. until it should be revised. Thus it has remained to this day. *Burn's Ecclesiastical Law*, Preface, p. xxv—xxxv. See also Bishop Gibson's *Codex Juris Eccl. Angl.* Introductory Discourse.

a "The ecclesiastical estate constitutes one of the three estates which compose the legislative government of this kingdom. This estate is no where properly represented but in its own House of Parliament. The continued prorogation of that House, though it has altered the practice, makes no alteration in the theory of our constitution." *Daubeny's Guide to the Church*, Appendix, p. 409. 2d edition.



that we should attribute a practice so utterly inconsistent with the plainest principles of a fair and federal union.

That it is thus inconsistent, must be sufficiently evident, when it is recollectcd that even ecclesiastical legislation is thereby consigned to assemblies either purely political, or into which ecclesiastics are too sparingly admitted to exert any decisive influence;—to assemblies, therefore, in the main composed of those who from education and habit are little acquainted with the interests of the Church ;—of many, it is to be feared, who are wholly indifferent to her welfare;—of some, perhaps, decidedly her enemies.

In citing an authority for the support of this argument, I am disposed to prefer that of Bishop Warburton, whose general and obvious leaning to the Erastian<sup>b</sup> notion of ecclesiastical subordination and civil supremacy, exempts him altogether from the

<sup>b</sup> The Erastians, a sect which arose in this country during the civil wars, were so named from Thomas Erasmus, a foreign physician, who appears to have been the first writer of note who attempted to prove the Christian Church a mere creature of the State, and denied her regular authority to excommunicate, absolve, decree, &c.



suspicion of advancing any questionable claims in behalf of the authority of the Church.—“ In a *federate alliance*,” says he, “ the two societies still subsist entire ; “ though in a subordination of one to the “ other ; in which case it seems agreeable “ to natural equity, that no alterations in “ Church-government should be made with- “ out the joint consent of both. If it should “ be said that ecclesiastics are placed in the “ civil courts of legislature for that pur- “ pose, I must beg leave to dissent. It “ hath been shewn they make no distinct “ estate there ; and consequently are not “ *representatives*, but *agents* only of the “ Church, to manage its concerns, and to “ give notice of what is transacting there, “ that regards its interests ;—in a word, to “ carry on a mutual intercourse of good “ offices between two societies so closely “ allied.”

In an age like the present however, when the stream of opinion has so long flowed in an uninterrupted current against the authority of the Church, it need not surprise

• Warburton’s Alliance, p. 157—160.



us that encroachments on her privileges, and irregularities of various descriptions, should have been commenced and persevered in. And it is unfortunately but too evident, that when once they have maintained their ground for a competent period, they assume all the consequence of prescription and natural right ; form the opinions, take hold on the affections, and effectually confirm the prejudices by which they were themselves produced. Nevertheless, to adopt the language of a living ornament of our Church, “ till better times shall come, “ when the kingdom of Christ shall be less “ embarrassed by that subjection to the “ powers of the world, which renders it “ now so often inefficacious, as to the high “ purposes of preserving in purity the faith “ once delivered to the saints, and of pro-“ moting holiness of living, we must sub-“ mit with resignation. But this submis-“ sion must not be construed into an un-“ holy surrender of those rights which the “ Church has no power to alienate.”

<sup>d</sup> Sikes's Discourse on Parochial Communion, p. 80.



Far be it from us to attach, as some have been disposed to do, the idea of a base and time-serving compliance to the conduct of our ecclesiastical superiors, for patiently acquiescing in a system which, in times like these, it is infinitely more easy for them to lament than to remedy. In a certain sense, and to a certain point, the times will and must be served. The original probability with respect to every human being is, that he fall more or less into the stream of prevailing opinion, however erroneous it may be. But if by some unusual chance he escape from it himself, what rational hope can he entertain of stemming it for others? Who shall pretend to maintain that any individual, or any probable combination of individuals, however high in influence, or however convinced of the importance of ecclesiastical reform, could now, in the present state of the public mind, rectify the abuses of the Church, and restore her to primitive discipline? No inconsiderable proportion of a whole national population must be similarly impressed, before a public change of any kind, however bene-



ficial, can be undertaken with a prospect of success. And it appears to be equally true, both of ecclesiastical and civil communities, that a reformation is seldom effected, or even attempted, till abuses have arrived at an alarming height, and threaten destruction to the existing system. Then at length it is, that men either awaken from their dream of false security, and become capable of those combined and strenuous exertions which can alone preserve them; or failing to be so awakened, sleep on to overwhelming ruin.

That a crisis of this description is advancing towards us with rapid strides, the daily increasing and almost unaccountable defections from the communion of our Church, give us but too much cause to apprehend. And when with well founded satisfaction we reflect on the scriptural purity of her doctrine, and the truly apostolical form of her polity, to what can we more naturally turn our eyes, I will not say as an excuse for these defections, for it is none, but as a cause, not improbably operating on the wayward tempers of men,



than the loss of primitive discipline, the declension of spiritual authority, and the undue subjection of the kingdom of Christ to the powers of the world?

May we not then be permitted to indulge the grateful hope, that at some more auspicious and not far distant period, the nearly impending hour of hazard may rouse the fears of the heedless, and awaken the zeal of the indifferent; may turn the tide of latitudinarian opinion, and lead to a general impression of the necessity of immediate recurrence to the more decisive exertion of ecclesiastical power?—that so, what no probable cooperation of zealous and enlightened Churchmen could now effect, what none therefore merit censure for omitting, might once more be effected, not only without offence, but with general approbation<sup>e</sup>;

e “ Then would every Bishop have full authority within himself to regulate and direct his Clergy; to correct vice, and reform error; and all Bishops would stand by and assert the discipline of each Bishop duly exercised within his own district; and the example would encourage others, and the reformation would become universal. Then Bishops would be justly chargeable with any scandals in the Clergy, or what was notorious



—that so, by the blessing of Christ on the endeavours of his faithful servants, his renovated Church might again possess the powers which he had himself assigned her, and instead of contenting herself with the annual and ineffectual wish for the restoration of “godly discipline,” might once more resume the exercise of that primitive authority, which stands yet unrepealed even in human statutes, and is demanded by the laws of God.

“ in any other of their subjects ; and with the growth of  
“ heresies and errors. And mere shame would bring  
“ matters to a decency, though every one had not the  
“ pure zeal of Christianity ; for which they have now too  
“ apparent an excuse, *viz.* that discipline is lost, and  
“ will not be permitted by the State ; which by virtue of  
“ *Congés d'élire, Quare impeditis, Prohibitions, &c.* have  
“ made themselves the sole and ultimate judges, not  
“ only of all Bishops and Churches, but of their excom-  
“ munications, and every exercise of their spiritual juris-  
“ diction.” *Leslie's Case of the Regale, &c. Works, vol. i.*  
p. 658.

<sup>f</sup> In the preface to the Office of Commination.



## SERMON VIII.

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GALAT. VI. 10.

*Let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.*

THE consideration of the origin and principles of that alliance which the Church of Christ has so generally formed with the powers of the world, is closely connected with the important question relating to her defence from external hostility, and to the conduct to be observed towards those who have separated themselves from her communion.

If it have already appeared that the Church, though originally independent, and competent to her own support, was nevertheless fully justified in uniting her interests with those of the State;—if we have seen too that the benefits thence derived to both the contracting parties are so conspicuous and extensive, as that nothing short of the gross-



est mismanagement could wholly annihilate them ;—whatever tends to maintain unimpaired this auspicious alliance, and secure its advantages, must be entitled to our most attentive regard. If, moreover, we have seen that our own Establishment, framed on the model of a federal and equitable union, was admirably calculated to preserve these benefits; and that even if it have in some degree failed in doing so, this failure is to be attributed, not to unsoundness of principle, but to laxity of practice, not to the defect of its institutions, but to the negligence of its members, and the latitudinarian spirit of the age ;—so that every dormant privilege, every obscured advantage is assuredly to be recovered, not by the adoption of novel maxims, but by the careful revival of the old, not by the violence of revolution, but by the calmer process of reform ;—it is incumbent on us to resist with jealous care every encroachment on a system, which, under circumstances confessedly unfavourable to their complete developement, is yet productive of inestimable blessings, and to beware lest that reformation from within,



by which these blessings might be multiplied and enhanced, be anticipated by destruction from without.

I. In order to present a correct idea of the means to be employed in the defence of an established Church, and of the just measure of that toleration<sup>a</sup> which should be granted to the adherents of Nonconformity, I must be allowed to take for granted, what it is presumed has been already satisfactorily shewn in the preceding Lecture, first, that the assistance which the Church derives from an alliance with the State, towards the propagation of Gospel truth, is most important and efficacious; in a word,

<sup>a</sup> To produce arguments in favour of toleration, and contend against the cruelty and impolicy of persecuting for religious opinions, is of course unnecessary when religious persecution has long been extinct, and a disposition to concede to the Dissenters every privilege not absolutely inconsistent with our safety is notorious. Witness the Toleration Act passed in the first year of William and Mary, exempting Nonconformists from the penalties to which they were previously subject, and the more recent removal of some of the disabilities affecting the Papists. But there is a manifest necessity for explaining and enforcing the just *limits* of toleration, lest indiscriminate concession should prove the ruin of Church and State.



that there is no human probability of genuine Christianity becoming a national religion without a national Church:—and secondly, that the two leading advantages towards the attainment of these her proper objects, which the Church had in view in forming this alliance, were a competent maintenance, and protection from external injury.

Now it must be obvious, that to separate these advantages is in fact to destroy them. To grant a liberal maintenance, and not secure it from invasion, is eventually to annul the grant;—it is at once to inflame and combine the spirit of emulation and envy, and allow free scope to its combined and mischievous exertions. “When one “religion is the established,” says Bishop Warburton, “and the rest under a toleration, then envy at the advantages of an “establishment will join the tolerated “Churches in a confederacy against it, “and unite them in one common attack “to disturb its quiet. In this imminent “danger the allied Church calls upon the “State for the performance of its con-



“ tract, which thereupon gives her a test  
 “ law for her security, whereby the en-  
 “ trance into the administration (the only  
 “ way the threatened mischief is effected)  
 “ is shut to all but members of the Esta-  
 “ blished Church<sup>b</sup>. ”

By a test law must be understood (to adopt the clear and unequivocal definition of the same writer) “ some sufficient proof

<sup>b</sup> Bishop Warburton’s Alliance between Church and State, p. 199, 200. third edit. “ An attempt in the members of any other Church to get into the administration, in order to deprive the Established Church of the covenanted rights which it enjoys, either by sharing those advantages with it, or by drawing them from it, is highly injurious. And we have shewn, that where there are diversities of religions, this attempt will be always making. The State then must defeat that attempt; .... but there is no other way of doing it, than by hindering its enemies from entering into the administration; .... but they can be hindered only by a *test law.* ” *Ibid.* p. 201. “ Before the alliance, it was only a mistaken aim in propagating truth that occasioned.... disorders. But now the zeal for opinions would be out of measure inflamed by envy and emulation; which the temporal advantages enjoyed by the Established Church, exclusive of the rest, will always occasion. And what mischiefs this would produce, had every sect a free entry into the administration, the reader may easily conceive.” *Ibid.* p. 207.



" or evidence, required from those admitted  
" into the administration of public affairs,  
" of their being members of the religion  
" established by law<sup>c</sup>." The want of such  
a law has once already most materially con-  
tributed to the temporary overthrow of our  
constitution, both ecclesiastical and civil.  
Under a full conviction of this want, from  
dear-bought experience, our tests<sup>d</sup> were

<sup>c</sup> Bishop Warburton's Alliance between Church and State, p. 196.

<sup>d</sup> By the 13 Car. II. stat. ii. cap. 2. it is enacted,  
" that no person shall in any corporation be elected  
" Mayor, Alderman, &c. who shall not within a year  
" before his election have taken the Sacrament of the  
" Lord's Supper, according to the rites of the Church  
" of England." By the 25 Car. II. cap. 2. it is enacted,  
" that all and every person that shall bear any office,  
" civil or military, &c. shall take the oaths of Supre-  
" macy and Allegiance, and shall also receive the Saera-  
" ment of the Lord's Supper, according to the usage of  
" the Church of England, &c." He is to make proof  
of this on pain of being incapable of the office, and  
other penalties. Inferior offices however are expressly  
excepted.

" The intention plainly was to keep Nonconformists  
" of all sorts (whose principles and affection to their  
" own ways cannot but lead them to use any power,  
" put into their hands, to the hurt of the Established  
" Church from which they have separated) out of offices



afterwards adopted; and if ever, through a weak compliance with the encroaching temper of these times, we consented to their total and unqualified repeal, we should have ample cause to anticipate a corresponding result. Of the permanent existence indeed of the Church of Christ, in the form of an endowed establishment, yet destitute of the protection here supposed, the restless and disorderly passions of our common nature appear to preclude every rational expectation.

The necessity of test laws being thus manifest, and the principles on which our own were framed being thus explained, it seems peculiarly unfortunate for the interests of the Established Church, that an important question intimately connected with these considerations, which has now for many years divided the opinions of the nation, has been very generally misunderstood; has been almost universally discussed, in public

“ civil and military, and out of the government and direction of corporations.” *Bishop Sherlock’s Arguments against a Repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts*, p. 2, 3.



at least, on principles very different from those which ought, in reason and consistency, finally to decide its fate;—has been considered too much as a political, too little as a religious question ; too much with reference to its separate effect on the particular sect more immediately and ostensibly concerned, too little with regard to its eventual operation on the general principles of a sober and legitimate toleration ; and that hence, by a sort of deplorable fatality, the apparent strength of the argument has not unfrequently rested with the really weaker side. For whilst one party affects to found its pleas for the admission of Papists to the common enjoyment of political rights, on the broad and captivating basis of liberality and equity and national security ;—and the other either inconsiderately refers to the recorded enormities of Popery, all future fear of which is instantly dispelled by a single glance at the depressed condition of the Church of Rome, or at least at her numerical insignificance amongst ourselves ; or else vaguely expresses an alarm for the safety of the esta-



blished religion, without precisely stating how that safety is to be affected;—can we doubt to which side the generous and inexperienced mind will naturally incline?

That the success of the measure alluded to involves in its necessary consequences, not perhaps the immediate, but most assuredly the eventual downfall of our venerated establishment, it will not, I think, be difficult to prove. What is usually termed the *Catholic question*, cannot, with any show of reason, be considered to be simply this; whether a Papist be equally entitled to our confidence with other sectaries, which might perhaps in our own case be safely answered in the affirmative;—but whether any sectary whatever ought to be fully admitted to the same political rights as the members of the national Church: to which I cannot but reply decidedly in the negative. For which of them could we consistently and fairly admit to the exclusion of the rest?—and if all were admitted, where could we look for those exclusive privileges which constitute the very essence of an establishment, and for that security from



hostile encroachment, which might ensure its permanence and peace?

That this is in fact the true scope and import of the great question alluded to, is really almost too obvious to require a regular proof. Can we, in short, doubt, but that the same spirit of mistaken liberality, the same insensibility to all religious distinctions, by which the primary point must be carried, holds in most sovereign contempt every exclusive right, every test, all, in fine, that raises our Church above the common level of the heresies around her; and if ever the long protracted day of triumph should arrive, would speedily sweep them away in one promiscuous mass, as the hateful relics of bigotry and usurpation?

To those who believe, that under these humiliating circumstances our Church would still subsist in her present form, and would still be competent to every purpose which she now fulfils; that the purity of her doctrines would still ensure her the protection of the powerful, and the respect of the people at large; that her revenues would be still inviolate, and her ecclesi-



astical jurisdiction continue unimpaired, though her political preminence were lost; I would earnestly suggest the following considerations.

It is certain, as it has been already remarked in explaining the first principles of a test, that our Church Establishment, like every other, is the natural object of envy to all those who, by dissenting from her principles, are excluded from her emoluments and privileges. Hence it has also been deemed almost a self-evident proposition, that a decided majority of the national population is requisite for her security ; and that if ever a majority, from whatever cause, should absolutely fail her, she must inevitably become the prey of her enemies. To retain this ma-

e “The Alliance is *perpetual*, but not *irrevocable*; i. e.  
“it subsists just so long as the Church thereby esta-  
“blished maintains its superiority of extent; which,  
“when it loses to any considerable degree, the alli-  
“ance becomes void. For the united Church being  
“then no longer able to perform its part of the conven-  
“tion, which it formed on reciprocal conditions, the  
“State becomes disengaged; and a *new alliance* is, of  
“course, contracted with the now prevailing Church,  
“for the reasons which made the old.” Warburton’s



jority then, must be the object of her real friends.

It will not, I presume, be contended, that the larger portion of individuals, in this or any other country, are sincerely pious, and warmly attached to religion for her own sake. Of those who are so amongst ourselves, some most certainly are to be found among the multitudes who have seceded from the Church. And the remainder, that faithful band, who love her from the purest motives and with undivided affection;—who would abide with her in every extremity, and shed their blood in her defence, must be infinitely unequal to her

*Alliance*, p. 198. There is much of truth in this argument of Bishop Warburton's, so far as it conveys an idea of the treatment which the Church has to *expect* from the State, upon the loss of her majority. But it is conveyed in terms which obviously insinuate that the apostolical Church of Christ has no more claim to the attention of the State, than any other sect or persuasion, her majority excepted; and that it is perfectly justified in adopting any one of the *Churches*, as he calls them, which may best suit its purpose. In the very next sentence he speaks of “the alliance between the ‘Pagan Church and the empire of Rome.’” This is the pervading alloy of his ingenious book.



protection, if ever they failed in attaching to her cause a competent share of that mass of religious indifference, which too plainly comprehends the great bulk of the community.

Now, as this aid is absolutely necessary to her security, so are the means of obtaining it most simple and infallible. For the selfsame laws which exclude the Non-conformist from those situations of political authority, which would put him into a capacity for injuring the Established Church, may be viewed in the additional light of an encouragement to conformity itself; and where no difference of opinion existed of sufficient moment to involve the sacrifice of duty and conscience, would naturally and effectually lead him to embrace her communion. Where the higher motives have lost their influence, we must condescend to employ the ordinary resources of human policy;—we must hold out some effectual encouragement to religious unity; we must make it men's interest to support, what they would otherwise be disposed to neglect.



Of those who now rank as members of the Established Church, and in fact contribute most essentially to her safety, how many must even charity herself admit to be totally destitute of Christian faith!—how many more are there whose confirmed indifference could never of itself have attached them to any religious community whatever! They have nevertheless joined her standard; and why?—because she is the religion of fashion and of the State; because they have discovered that she is the only direct and unobstructed road to the more distinguished honours and emoluments; or because their ancestors having made the same discovery, the prejudices of their education have been fixed accordingly.

Now, whatever we may think of the character of such men, yet so long as numerical superiority is necessary to the existence of our Church as an establishment, their aid is not to be rejected. But shall we expect to retain that aid on the comprehensive principles which distinguish the liberality of the day? When all the exclusive



rights of the Church should have been finally abandoned, when our especial favours were no longer conferred on “them “who are of the household of faith;”— when every department of the legislature, every post of honour and authority, of trust and profit, should be equally within the attainment of every sect and persuasion, religious or irreligious, to which of all those minor, but certainly most prevailing motives, should we look for retaining the aid in question? Could we depend on *fashion*, whose caprice might shortly enlist her in the service of any one of the more plausible heresies, when the Church had lost all that appearance of superior consequence, which could alone attract her? Could we rely on *ambition*, whose views would be alike unobstructed in the conventicle as in the Church? Could we hope to engage *self-interest* in our behalf, without one single advantage to offer to her acceptance? Or rather, could we have any reasonable expectations of retaining her even in a state of neutrality, when the prospect of sharing in our spoils must inevitably turn the scale against us?



Of all the motives of attachment, not strictly religious, one only could be in any degree relied on, and that but for a season. The prejudices of education, and the impressions of early life, would no doubt retain some advocates for the Church, as the establishment of their fathers, and the object of their habitual veneration. It does indeed appear *possible* that this principle might for some few years preserve from total ruin the falling fortunes of the Church. But the source from whence it flowed would, from obvious causes, be daily becoming less and less copious; and long before it should be finally exhausted, it would have ceased to oppose any effectual resistance to that sweeping tide of more prevailing motives, whose constantly augmented current would set directly against it.

In a word, if there be any truth in what has been here advanced, one most powerful argument for rejecting the claims in question lies within this short and simple compass;—whilst we maintain those exclusive privileges which tempt indifference to join our party, “those who are not against us ‘will be for us;’” but if ever, in compli-



ance with the headstrong temper of the times, we consent to relinquish these privileges, indifference must infallibly operate as schism, and “those who are not for us “will be against us.”

II. If there be any who object, that it is beneath the dignity of religion to condescend to such ignoble aid, that it is to pollute her sacred cause by too close an union with the vulgar maxims of worldly policy; it may be replied, that the miraculous assistance, with which the Almighty was pleased to second the exertions of the original propagators of the Gospel, was withdrawn when the occasion ceased to require it;—that we now enjoy in fair and full possession the inestimable treasures of a pure and uncorrupted religion, and that universal diffusion of its sacred truths, which an Establishment alone could have accomplished, whilst nothing is wanting to retain them, but the Divine blessing on the ordinary efforts of men; that to neglect these efforts would be folly and presumption, would be giving a most unnecessary proof, that “the children of this world are wiser



" in their generation than the children of  
" light!"

If the higher motives could really be expected to prevail ;—if the genuine love of truth and a sincere attachment to religion really characterized mankind in general ;—if their universal freedom from prejudice would allow them to appreciate our claims to their adherence, and their candour insure their support ;—then might we safely throw down every barrier for which we are contending ; then might we safely abandon every minor inducement, and confidently leave truth to her own protection. But whilst men are men ; whilst passion and prejudice and interest combine to bias their opinions, we must treat them as men ;—we must not expect miracles in our favour, where we might have accomplished our purpose by human means.

But there are others who object to the intimate connexion between religion and policy, not from a regard to her interests, but from an absolute indifference to her

<sup>1</sup> Luke xvi. 8.



cause; not from a well meaning though mistaken veneration for the unsullied purity of religion, but from an exclusive devotion to the maxims of worldly policy. The tried and sacred alliance, which has so long subsisted between our ecclesiastical and civil institutions, they would willingly overlook ; —they would fain persuade themselves, either that it does not strictly exist at all, or that it might be dissolved with perfect safety. Or perhaps, to speak more correctly, they esteem religion as wholly subordinate to political considerations ; as something to be supported, perhaps, if it accord with other views, but to give way upon the first appearance of contending interests. Their language, indeed, is little different from this ;—“ Take care of your “ State, unite her population, combine her “ resources, consolidate her strength. If “ this can be effected with safety to your “ religious system, it is well ;—but if not, “ at all events take care of your State, and “ let religion provide for herself.”

Do the inhabitants of this Christian country really require to be informed, that reli-



gion is the “<sup>g</sup>one thing needful,” their first, their most momentous concern? Have they never heard of the blessings with which Heaven rewards the piety of nations; or, having heard of them, do they rank them with the dreams of dotage and enthusiasm? Are they contented literally to “trust in ‘man,’ ” to “make flesh their arm,” and in their “hearts” to “depart from the Lord”? <sup>b</sup>

But if the weakness of their faith should render them unassailable by arguments like these, have they no reliance on historical experience, no capacity even for observing the passing occurrences of their own times? At an eventful period of our history, the Church fell not without the simultaneous ruin of the State; and their cause was united, when they rose again to power and safety. And those must be blind indeed to the signs of these portentous times, who see not that a spirit is abroad amongst us, implacably hostile to all that is venerable from prescriptive right or dignity of station; the foe no less of civil authority, than of ecclesiastical rule; and

<sup>g</sup> Luke x. 42.

<sup>b</sup> Jeremiah xvii. 5.



that, even were our Church and our State less intimately blended in their very frame and constitution, than they notoriously are, that restless spirit of innovation, that profligate “despising of dominion,” which mark the temper of the age, would rejoice to consign them both to indiscriminate destruction.

But it has been contended, that however efficacious a test law may be in the preservation of an ecclesiastical establishment, it is founded on principles palpably unjust, inasmuch as it excludes some men from the capacity for sharing in the honours and profits of civil government, to which it is urged that all have a natural and equal right.—But it is here forgotten that the first and fundamental article of government is the submission of private rights to the public good;—and if even the strongest of all natural rights, the right to food and raiment, thus becomes subject to the limitations of human laws, are we to suppose that the capacity for office is subject to no limitation whatever<sup>i</sup>?

<sup>i</sup> See Bishop Sherlock, *Arguments against a Repeal*  
v a 3



The plainest principles of self-protection demand the exclusion of the disaffected from the councils of the State;—and it has been correctly and forcibly remarked, that it is “evident, that when a Church and “State are in union, he that cannot give “security for his behaviour to both, may “with as much reason be deprived of some “civil advantages, as he who before the “union could not give security to the “State alone.””—“All governments have

of the Corporation and Test Acts, p. 19, 20. “Reward is not one of the sanctions of civil society; the only claim which subjects have on the magistrate for obedience being protection. Now the consequence of this is, that all places of honour and profit in the magistrate’s disposal, are not there in the nature of a trust, to be claimed and equally shared by the subject; but of the nature of a prerogative, which he may dispose of at pleasure, without being further accountable than for having such places capably supplied.” *Warburton’s Alliance*, p. 209, 210. “Let the world be informed how it comes to pass that the Kings of England have less privilege than any of their subjects; and why that very limitation is just and expedient when applied to the Crown, which is so great an oppression, so subversive of natural right, when applied to the people.” *Sherlock’s Arguments against a Repeal &c.* p. 38.

<sup>k</sup> *Warburton’s Alliance*, p. 195.



“ a right,” says Bishop Sherlock “(and  
“ all wise governments make use of it,) to  
“ provide against probable dangers to the  
“ State; in consequence of which they have  
“ a right to provide that all power in the  
“ State shall be lodged in such hands only  
“ as they reasonably judge to be well af-  
“ fected; and here the rules of prudence  
“ must govern. It may be very consistent  
“ to declare against punishing men in their  
“ lives and fortunes for those reasons, which  
“ nevertheless are good reasons for exclud-  
“ ing them from all places of power and  
“ trust.. It would be very unreasonable to  
“ beat a man, because he has an infectious  
“ distemper; yet it is very reasonable to  
“ deny him a place in the family upon this  
“ account; for in one case I should injure  
“ him, in the other I only take care of my-  
“ self!”

Before a test law therefore can be fairly charged with tyranny and injustice, it must either be proved that it excludes those whom there is no reason for excluding;—

<sup>1</sup> Sherlock's Arguments against a Repeal, &c. p. 22.



or else, that there is no material difference between actual punishment and simple restraint<sup>m</sup>; between persecuting others for their religious tenets, and securing ourselves from being persecuted for our own.

But it has been still farther objected, that our employment of the sacramental test must frequently lead to the profanation of that most sacred ordinance<sup>n</sup>; and on the whole, that to make religion a test at all in civil matters, is to hold out an undue temptation to an hypocritical conformity. That such unhappy abuses should sometimes ensue, is indeed most deeply to be lamented; yet still the laws are not chargeable with the wickedness of those who abuse them. Let it be remembered, that religion is equally the test when an oath is administered<sup>o</sup>;—

<sup>m</sup> See Warburton's Alliance, p. 212—217.

<sup>n</sup> It is observable at all events, that the State requires no more as a proof of conformity to the Church, than the Church herself requires in all who maintain her communion; and which she would actually enforce, if her primitive discipline were restored.

<sup>o</sup> “When the magistrate requires an oath, he lays hold on the natural sense and obligation we are under “to believe in and to fear God, and grounds the test



but was it ever contended that the use of oaths should be abolished in order to remove all temptations to perjury? If the laws then are not accountable for the perjury of a corrupt witness, how can they be justly chargeable with the profaneness of an hypocritical communicant<sup>p</sup>?

“on them. When he requires the sacramental test, he  
“lays hold of the obligation we are under to communicate  
“with that Church which we esteem to be a true  
“part of the Church of Christ, and grounds the test on  
“it.—And the reader has it now fairly before him, to  
“judge how far religion is in both cases a civil test,  
“and whether it be not at least as much so in the first  
“case as in the latter.” *Sherlock’s Arguments against a Repeal Sc.* p. 62.

<sup>p</sup> “If the iniquity of men in abusing any law be sufficient reason for abrogating such law, I would fain know what law ought to stand in force. What perjuries, what frauds, what cheats are made use of, to avoid the many laws for imposing customs on trade! Will any man turn advocate for the removal of these laws also? Will any man say, that no temporal advantage or convenience to the State can justify the great abuse of religion, and the manifest breach of plain duties occasioned by these laws? Will any man plead for abolishing the use of oaths, since perjury is not a more crying than it is a common sin?.....As the laws requiring the sacramental test do not make men wicked and profane; so neither will removing those laws make them pious or holy. The remedy must be ap-



Besides, we have a right to presume that the practice to which the encouragement points, is in itself and in its own nature good ; that the religion to which conformity is induced is pure and true ; and the ordinance recommended not only lawful, but enjoined by the command of God. Shall we then withdraw the encouragement, because hypocrisy may occasionally abuse it ? As well might we withhold, as inexpedient or mischievous, the ordinary rewards of virtuous conduct, because we may possibly tempt some to assume its hypocritical resemblance<sup>q</sup>.

" plied to the men. It is the wickedness of the receiver  
" that calls for correction." *Sherlock's Arguments against  
a Repeal &c.* p. 14, 15. See also Warburton's Alliance,  
p. 233, 234.

<sup>q</sup> " Are they who encourage virtue and true religion  
" answerable for the hypocrisy of those, who will pre-  
" tend to virtue and religion, in order to share in the  
" encouragement ? If they are, then it is a wicked thing  
" in itself to encourage virtue and true religion ; and a  
" father is a wicked man who rewards one son for doing  
" well, because thereby he may possibly tempt another  
" to make a shew of doing well ! A gentleman in the  
" country, who shews some mark of favour to his poor  
" neighbours who religiously attend the public service  
" of God, is really by so doing drawing upon himself



Neither let it be forgotten, that he who, from whatever inducement it may be, conforms at all to our excellent Church, is at once open to the probable accession of more worthy motives; may learn at length to venerate what at first he had regarded with indifference;—that one most important advantage is at least obtained; that his posterity at least are “trained up in “the way they should go,” and afford the cheering expectation, that “when they are “old they will not depart from it.””

There is one other argument frequently advanced by the adverse party, of some plausibility indeed, but of little real weight; which it is here perhaps proper to notice. They contend that our restrictions operate more severely on the Papist, than on the other Dissenters from the Established Church;—that they are so contrived as effectually and universally to exclude the con-

“the wrath of God, by laying a temptation before others  
“to make an appearance of being better than really  
“they are!”” *Sherlock's Arguments against a Repeal &c.*

p. 73.

• Proverbs xxii. 6.



scientious Papist from all political importance, whilst men of some other persuasions can occasionally, and without offence to their consciences, insinuate themselves into situations of trust and power. They would therefore demand our admission of the claims in question, on the broad principles of justice and consistency.

When our tests were framed, their precautions were naturally directed against the party which then appeared the most formidable to the Church and State; and if ever it were found expedient to re-model them, they would of course be calculated for the prevailing encroachment of the day<sup>s</sup>. But though the well known and unavoidable imperfection of human laws must for ever probably prevent their universal and equal operation;—though we must admit that this inequality has been needlessly aggravated by neglecting to enforce their pro-

<sup>s</sup> Though the Test Act was framed principally with a view to the Papists, it is far from following, as some have been disposed to maintain, that it was not then intended to apply to Protestant Dissenters. The Toleration Act itself declares that it extends to them.



visions, and, what is worse, though this neglect has in some cases been preposterously encouraged by legal indemnity and sanction;—still those persons, most certainly, on whom they operate as they ought, have no just pretence for complaint and clamour. With equal justice might the criminal arraign the laws by which his life is forfeited; with equal consistency might we abrogate our whole penal code, because some crimes are inaccessible to its enactments.

If we must be consistent, let our consistency be shewn in promoting the more regular and efficient influence of those salutary restraints to which we owe our safety. Shall we indeed level every barrier, because some have failed? Shall we madly pour in the full flood of ruin on the devoted land, because some lesser streams have passed their banks?

There are some, no doubt, among the advocates for the measure in question, who are fully aware of its tendency to destroy the Established Church; and who hope to replace it by another, of course, if possible,



their own. And some others perhaps there may be, who deem an establishment altogether unnecessary, from a full persuasion that truth, religious truth more especially, is amply competent to her own support.

The former of these persons might well be asked, which of all the various heresies of the present day, whose only point of union is hostility to ourselves, can boast of either the numbers or the importance, which could afford them any rational hope whatever of succeeding to our place. In fact, the prevailing spirit of these times, that utter insensibility to all the distinctions of religion, is peculiarly adverse to the formation of a new establishment. And the selfsame principles, on which the proposed measure would effect the destruction of our present system, must equally tend to restrain the aspirings of any other. In a word, the question seems to lie, not between rival forms of ecclesiastical discipline, but between our present form and none.—And if there be any who doubt the baneful effects on the religious character of the people, which would result from the utter want of an Establish-



ed Church, they may be amply satisfied by directing their attention to the instructive example already suggested in the preceding Lecture, of a nation once intimately connected with ourselves; where the piety of the few, deprived of the regular guidance of spiritual authority, has taken refuge in the wildest varieties of fanaticism; and the indifference and uninstructed ignorance of the many, are rapidly verging towards almost Pagan darkness<sup>t</sup>.

Whoever contemplates in the comparison that scriptural purity of doctrine which distinguishes our Church, and that rational and consistent piety which she inculcates, and which in truth she still produces in numbers not yet inconsiderable of her zealous and faithful adherents, will require no better evidence of her inestimable value, will be sensible that every exertion and every sacrifice is due to her sacred cause; —above all, he will learn to view with just feelings of apprehension and regret, that blind indifference which at once disgraces

<sup>t</sup> See note 4, p. 317.



her name and threatens her existence, which is prepared to give up, without an effort and without a thought, the highest of all earthly blessings, and may soon be lamenting as lost, what it would vainly attempt to restore.

III. That the dangers which threaten the overthrow of our national Church have of late years been rapidly accumulating, appears to be generally admitted; and it is a fact no less notorious than it is deplorable, that these dangers are infinitely augmented by the preposterous negligence of too many of her professed friends. Captivated by the imposing pretensions of a spurious, yet prevailing liberality, they retain no lively sense of her superior and exclusive claims to their affection and support, and are animated by no zeal, and by consequence capable of no effectual exertion, in maintaining those constitutional barriers, which the wisdom and piety of their ancestors had provided for her defence.

An indifference indeed to the interests of religion, of religious communities more especially, must, I apprehend, be considered



as disgracefully characteristic of the times in which we live, above every preceding age since the foundation of our faith. Though the natural disinclination of the human heart towards its spiritual concerns,—the facility with which every trifling worldly object interests the attention, whilst the glorious hopes and awful fears of futurity are overlooked and forgotten, has ever been lamented by pious men; yet this lukewarm spirit has usually been found to affect mankind rather in their individual capacity, than as members of religious communities. In whatever way the apparent inconsistency may be accounted for, public zeal has often shewn itself by no means incompatible with private indifference, and many a man has been roused even to enthusiastic exertions in the cause of a national belief, whom no arguments could ever prevail on to “work out his own salvation.”

A period might be pointed out in the history of this kingdom, when it was eminently distinguished by an ardent zeal for the established faith;—a zeal, not indeed in every single instance attended by a cor-



responding piety, nor always perhaps un-tinctured by bitterness or bigotry;—but still it was a zeal which would have made even error itself respectable, and compared with which, the apathy of these later times must be viewed with shame and sorrow. Even at a period comparatively recent, and indeed within the memory of some here present, the justly celebrated Burke, whose judgment on such a point will scarcely be disputed, ventured to pour-tray the general attachment of the people of this nation to the Established Church in these decisive terms. “They do not,” says he, “consider their Church Establishment “as convenient, but as essential to their “State; not as a thing heterogeneous and “separable; something added for accom-“modation;—what they may either keep “up or lay aside, according to their tem-“porary ideas of convenience. They con-“sider it as the foundation of their whole “constitution, with which, and with every “part of which, it holds an indissoluble “union. Church and State are ideas in-“separable in their minds, and scarcely is



"the one ever mentioned, without men-  
"tioning the other."<sup>u</sup>

If this description may be depended on, and we could scarcely select a more competent authority, deplorable indeed is the change which a few short years have wrought amongst us, and the rapidity with which it has been effected is most alarming. We are now, unhappily, become but too consistent. Individual lukewarmness is now too little relieved by any public feeling of attachment to our national religion; and he who in private life profanes the sabbath, and neglects the ordinances of the Church, can now await with corresponding unconcern the final abandonment of all her privileges; can raise his voice against her in the senate, if he have found admission there; in confident assurance of the unqualified plaudits of a daily increasing faction, whose expanded views retain no sense of *religious* distinctions;—or rather who consider religion as absolutely secondary to worldly policy, and, for the sake of a

<sup>u</sup> Burke's *Reflexions on the Revolution in France*; Works, vol. iii. p. 139.



political chimera, would readily sacrifice the venerable establishment of their fathers.

That those whose minds are unconvinced of the truth of the Christian Revelation, should regard with equal eye every possible variety of religious persuasion, and deem all exclusive rights, all attempts to cherish one mode of faith in preference to another, as the result of bigotry and injustice, is natural and necessary. And that those whose dissent from the established Creed abridges their political importance, should contend for similar principles, is of course to be expected. But that men who are thoroughly satisfied of the truth of Christianity, who are sensible of the expediency of an ecclesiastical establishment, and of the excellence of our own, should by any arguments whatever have been induced to second these assailants, and thus to concur in giving currency to opinions so manifestly subversive of all that they profess to venerate, is no less astonishing as a fact, than it is alarming in its too probable consequences.

To resolve this portentous phenomenon, I fear we must have recourse to the cause



already suggested, the disgraceful characteristic of the present day. For notwithstanding the undoubted piety, and I may even add the sincere attachment to the Established Church, which distinguishes some at least of the party in question, and notwithstanding those other exceptions, which that “charity” which “hopeth and “believeth all things<sup>x</sup>” will be disposed to make, so widely prevalent a misconception, on the subject of our religious interests, can scarcely be attributed, in the main, to any other source than gross indifference. For men are proverbially quick-sighted on the approach of danger towards any object to which they are warmly attached; and if once the love of religion herself, and by consequence the love of her more approved form, firmly occupied the heart, not even the plausibilities of modern liberality, nor the imposing name of political justice, could readily lull to sleep the jealous vigilance of true affection.

It cannot be too distinctly observed, nor too carefully remembered, that if the prin-

<sup>x</sup> 1 Cor. xiii. 6.



ciples which it has been the object of these Lectures to establish, are sound and true, this our Church, thus imminently endangered at once by external hostility and internal neglect, is not only a strictly genuine branch of the one universal Church of Christ, but in this country exclusively so, and that she would not cease to be so, even though her enemies should succeed in removing her from every temporal distinction, and “lay ‘her honour in the dust;’”—that she would still remain that religious society, to separate from which would be a sinful schism;—that her characteristic claims to the conformity of the people, her apostolical polity, her divinely instituted priesthood, her creeds of scriptural purity, her sublime and primitive liturgy, would survive her fall;—and though of faithful adherents she might retain a remnant only, they would at least be a remnant of that Church, against which we have the assurance of Christ himself, that “even ‘the gates of hell shall not prevail.’” To adopt the correct and unequivocal language of one of the ablest of her yet surviving

y Matthew xvi. 18.



defenders: "A national establishment protects and supports, but does not make a Church of Christ. It was a Church of Christ previously to its establishment by the State, and it will continue to be the same Church, should the State think fit to desert it. The Church of Christ in this country is established because it is the Church of Christ, but it is not the Church of Christ because it is established."

If principles like these, the very foundation of Christian Unity, are unhappily becoming comparatively obsolete amongst us; —if schism in all its forms is daily adopted and maintained, for the most part (as in charity we can scarcely fail to admit) in utter ignorance of the heinousness of the offence, who can sufficiently deplore the growing disposition, so notoriously evinced by our legislative body, to confirm and sanction these dangerous impressions by their own deliberate act;—to remove at once every human encouragement to "the

<sup>2</sup> Daubeny's Guide to the Church. Appendix, p. 112.  
2d edit.



“ unity of the Spirit” amongst a people already prone to despise it, beyond the example of former ages;—to say, as it were, to them, with the voice of high and undisputed authority;—“ Your religious dissensions are a matter of absolute indifference;—you may indulge in them, not only with the impunity which you have hitherto experienced, but with perfect convenience to yourselves, and,” by an inference, which must naturally follow in the inexperienced mind, “ with perfect innocence in the sight of God and man.”

That our Establishment could long survive the effects of such a measure, without adverting to the arguments already advanced for the necessity of a test law, it will be difficult to believe, if we simply consider the height to which schism has attained, under encouragements far less decisive. Indeed the anticipated success of the projected innovation is hailed by one party as an approaching triumph; whilst the other either seem insensible to its consequences, or else with a strange combination of despondency as to the event, and



indolent security as to themselves, which cannot be sufficiently lamented, have taken refuge in the miserable hope, that though the evil *may* be certain, its progress *must* be slow, and that long before the gathering storm shall burst on the devoted land, the peaceful shelter of the grave shall have skreened them from its fury.

But have they never marked the increasing velocity with which great political bodies gravitate to ruin? Or if they are satisfied of the safety of the present generation, have they no regard for the interests of posterity; are they bound by no ties of duty to transmit unimpaired to their descendants, those advantages which they have themselves inherited? That these are not times for indolence and indifference will surely be allowed; and despondency can only tend either to invite the premature approach of the evil, should it really be inevitable, or else to paralyze those strenuous exertions which might yet avert it.

It is not for those at least, who are duly sensible of the blessings which they enjoy,



tamely to yield them up without an effort ; it is not for them to abandon their hopes, while room for hope remains ;—but it is now, if ever, incumbent on them to combine their utmost endeavours to rouse a luke-warm public from their inveterate lethargy, and to remove from their eyes that specious veil of misapprehension and delusion, which indifference can never be expected to remove for itself. Above all, it is the imperious duty of the divinely appointed “stewards of the mysteries of God,” to inculcate with renewed earnestness the long neglected principles of Christian unity, and, whilst they exercise all charity, in thought and word and act, towards those whose prejudices are inveterate beyond every remaining probability of reunion, to labour zealously, where success may yet reward their pious efforts, to reclaim the misguided, to enlighten the ignorant, to confirm the wavering, and fortify the weak ; to stand, as it were, “between the dead and the living,” that, by the Divine blessing,

<sup>a</sup> Numb. xvi. 48.



“the plague” of spreading defection may yet be “stayed”; to persuade them, if it be yet possible, to “know, at least in this “their day, the things which belong unto “their peace,” before “they are hid from “their eyes<sup>b</sup>:”

<sup>b</sup> Luke xix. 42.

THE END.

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JULY 75

N. MANCHESTER,  
INDIANA

